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MUSINGS ON A

LOCOMOTIVE

BY

J. WHEELER HEYLMUN

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J. Wheeler Heyhmun

MUSINGS

—ON A—

LOCOMOTIVE

—BY—

J. WHEELER HEYLMUN

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1887
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TO THE

BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS

AND

ORDER OF RAILWAY CONDUCTORS

THIS

LITTLE VOLUME

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to a human being, or any word that I can speak for the good of others, let me do it now. Let me not neglect nor defer it; for I shall not pass this way again.—*Anonymous.*

PREFACE.

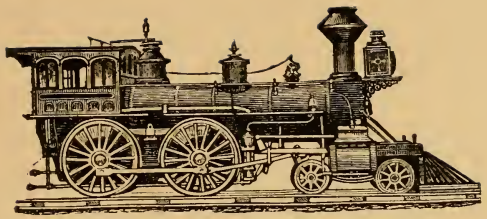
Dear Reader: I wish to say that I have not been weighed in the literary scale and balanced with the educational weight; therefore you will possibly pardon my intrusion in submitting for your perusal this little volume. You will please consider that the majority of my school-days were spent where the side-hill forest was my school-room, the overhanging hemlocks and maples my roof, a mall and wedge my spelling-book, an axe my pen, the sweat of my brow my ink, a ten-foot pole my arithmetic, and a pile of wood eight feet long, four feet wide and four feet high my lesson when time to recite. When you place my faults in the scale of criticism, touch the beam gently and remember the circumstances which surrounded my early life.

J. Wheeler Heylmun.

As this volume will come into the hands of his family and some personal friends of his, the author may be pardoned for introducing here some data from a brief biography of himself which recently appeared in a Williamsport newspaper:

J. Wheeler Heylmun lives at Marsh Hill, Pa. All of his poems were composed while he was in the cab of his locomotive stand-

ing on sidings waiting for signals. In the *Railroad Conductor's Monthly*, and other journals to which he has contributed, Mr. Heylmun was known as "Joe Canthook." He is the youngest of ten children, and was born near Ralston June 10, 1848. His boyhood days were spent on his parents' farm, where he chopped cordwood, made shingles, and helped clear a large portion of woodland. He acquired a common-school education, such as is obtained in the country districts. Mr. Heylmun served his country as a soldier in the late war, having been honorably discharged from service February 4, 1864, at Camp Stoneman Hospital. In 1867 he went West, engaging in steamboating with his brother, Captain D. W. Heylmun, of Eau Claire, Wis. Not being able to stand the climate, he returned to Pennsylvania in 1870, resuming farming with his father until 1873, when he engaged as a locomotive fireman on the Northern Central Railway. By the faithful discharge of his duties he was promoted to the position of engineer in 1879, which post he filled until February 19th last, when he was compelled to resign, owing to impaired health. During the time he served as engineer he received two thousand and fifteen train orders and never made a single mistake, nor had an accident on account of his own negligence.



TO A LOCOMOTIVE.

Proud chariot of the iron rail,
With golden stripes and glittering bands,
Without me soon thy strength would fail—
I hold thy life within my hands.

With iron lungs and heated breath,
Thou 'rt always willing to obey,
But many men have met their death
While speeding on their midnight way.

O, mighty monster warm with life,
May Heaven guide thy ponderous feet
And wheel me back to my dear wife
And little children, pure and sweet.

But if the all-wise Providence
Should choose to wreck my swift-winged train,
I still must take life's narrow chance
And at my post perhaps be slain.

Brave engineers, take up the Book—
That book which God on high designed,
And in the book of Nahum look,
There "chariot" you will surely find.

You'll see the second chapter treats
(In verses numbered three and four)
Of "chariots raging in the streets"—
A fulfilled prophecy of yore.

THE HOME OF MY BIRTH.

TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

I 'd love to go back to the home of my birth,
For I think it the loveliest place upon earth,
And there sit me down on the bank of the pond,
Where I rigged out a ship for East India bound;

Where I tore the sleeve out of my old ragged coat
And made a new sail for my miniature boat;
Where a spider, a cricket, a big bumblebee,
I shut in the cabin and sent out to sea.

I 'd love to go back and fish in the brook
Where oft I cast out my little pin hook
And cared not what took it, a chub or a trout,
For it tickled me so to pull something out.

I 'd love to go back to the sweet little rill
That murmurs along at the foot of the hill,
Where I whittled out wheels at my own childish will
And set them a-buzzing in my crude little mill.

Now I wander away in a sad, wakeful dream
To the lone, shady bank of that sweet little stream.
But the dear little mill it has all rotted down
And willows and daisies above it have grown.

Yet methinks I can still see the overshot wheel
And the sawdust that flew from the keen-cutting steel,
And the white-rippling spray as it rapidly swam
Far below o'er the breast of the little mill dam.

I love the old swamp where the calimus grew,
With its long, limber blades all beaded with dew.
And I'd love to go back and to walk around there,
And to take in the breath of the pure mountain air.

I 'd love to go back there and play in the sand,
Where I marked out great towns with my little brown hand;
When startled I was by the bite of the ants
That crept through the holes of my old ragged pants.

Oft in visions I wander, with longing and tears,
To that humble old home of my babyhood years;
And there's joy in my heart when I dream of the place
Where once I engaged in a butterfly chase,

When I heard a sweet voice call, "Now, what are you at?"
As I caged the blue butterfly under my hat;

'T was the voice of my mother, who did me chastise
For chasing and wounding the poor butterflies.

I ne'er shall forget those old memories sweet,
Those days of my rags and my little bare feet;
For they'll cling to my heart here until that dark day
When I give up the ghost and go down to decay.

I 'd love to go back and repose by the spring
Where often I sat me and heard the birds sing,
And in youth's wise assurance laid many a plan
To make me more happy when I 'd be a man.

But, alas! the sad changes, unrealized schemes!
For now I 'm a man I 'm a boy in my dreams.
My mind flashes back like a warm-glowing spark,
When I listen again to the sweet meadow lark.

The bluebirds, the robins, the wild honey bees,
The lilies, the daisies, and all the green trees
Bring afresh to my mem'ry Hope's golden alloy
That mixed with my pleasures when I was a boy.

How I 'd love to go back and again in the field
Grasp the scythe and the cradle I often did wield
And lay into swath the moist gold-tinted grain
That waved in the breeze on that fair, fragrant plain!

O the days of my boyhood, how fast they have fled!
How pale are the cheeks that were once round and red!

My once sable locks they are fast fading now,
'Tis the plowshare of time that shall furrow my brow.

When brothers and sisters and parents were there
No happier home could be found anywhere,
But the chain of affection that bound us so long
Death ruthless hath severed, and scattered the throng.

But how sweet the belief that there 's somewhere a goal,
A rest for the weary, a home for the soul—
On then to that portal! O there let me fly
When the fond recollections of childhood shall die!

What worth is the life of a man that was born
Within the rude walls of a home so forlorn,
Untaught by a teacher, unknown by the wise,
Though the home of his heart be a bright paradise?

Why hast Thou, O God, created mankind
That only in childhood true joy we may find?
And when we are feeble, decrepit or blind,
A little child's reason takes hold of the mind?

Dear brothers and sisters, accept my frail lines,
My bad managed grammar and imperfect rhymes;
But of all the sweet sonnets, to me, sung on earth,
This song is the sweetest—"The home of my birth."

ASTONVILLE, THE PLACE OF MY SCHOOL DAYS.

TO MY SCHOOLMATES.

Dear schoolmates, accept this, for in it you 'll find
Some sweet recollections brought back to your mind,
For I have endeavored to dwell upon truth
In painting the scenes of the days of our youth.

It is twenty-three years since I gamboled around
This spot where I sit—the old school playing ground—
But sweet are the mem'ries that come back to me
As I sit meditating beneath this elm tree.

How dear to my heart are the days that are gone,
When a school boy I roamed through this green, leafy lawn,
When a thought for the future ne'er entered my mind,
But on honey of pleasure my heart ever dined.

But with them again I shall never be blest,
Those joys that once budded and bloomed in my breast,
For Time, the destroyer, hath shattered the bowl
And destroyed all that nectar so sweet to the soul.

O, what are the pleasures of manhood compared
With the happy school days that we all of us shared,
As we ran to the mill pond intent for a swim
And home skulking back in the twilight so dim?

I wander away to the bank of the brook
Where in youth I repaired to dispute with my book,
But the channel has changed this long many a day;
The happy stream travels a different way.

Again I go back where the school building stood,
There find the spot marked by some fast-crumbling wood;
And as I look down I find it 's a sill—
The last of the school house of old Astonville!

Ah, here is the path that the bare feet have worn,
There the wild apple tree, and still yonder the thorn,
And there is the group of tall, wavering pine
That shades me again in my day of decline.

But where are the comrades that danced in the plays
At recess and noon, in the long summer days?
Some low in the churchyard asleep in their graves,
And some in the ocean deep under the waves.

Some still are my friends, and some others are foes,
And what some are that strayed, the good God only knows,

But the one that was dearest of all to my life
Was the belle of the village—my dear, noble wife.

I remember a teacher who once taught the school,
For she blistered my hand with a large cherry rule,
But when she had gone to her dinner at noon
With my jack-knife I slivered that rule pretty soon.

That same afternoon I got stuck on a sum,
And of course I expected a thrashing would come,
But the fear of the thrashing soon drifted to bliss,
For she came to me, hugged me, and gave me a kiss.

There was Miss Hettie Garretson and Miss Lizzie Phelps,
O how they wolloped us poor little whelps,
'Till the dust of our jackets rolled up every stroke,
As they laid on a sprout of the hardy white oak.

O why are my eyelids now moistened with tears?
Can it be I 've been dreaming for twenty-three years?
No! this is reality—no idle dream,
For I 'm alone, wide-awake, on the old village green.

Yes, this is the village where industry throve
And people dwelt happy in kindness and love,
And the flames of the furnace flashed up in the night
As it were to bedim the fair, bright northern light.

As my eyes now survey all these beautiful scenes
I 'm carried away to the days of my teens,
But I see not the flames in their brilliancy shine,
Nor hear the great axe as it splinters the pine.

The gas that loom'd up here like purple and gold
Was the breath of the engine, now silent and cold;
And e'en on the top of the tunnel head wall
The wild ivy vines are beginning to crawl.

The houses are rotten that made up the town,
And the walls of the furnace are all tumbling down,
And Industry's wheels, they have wended away,
And old Astonville lies in ruins to-day.

THE GRAVES OF MY KINDRED.

DEDICATED TO MY CHILDREN.

Dear children, sweet children, the questions you ask,
To answer them truly would be a sad task;
But I will endeavor the truth to impart
If the grief in my bosom don't burst my poor heart.

Come, children, now listen, a story I 'll tell,
While in it the soul of thy father shall dwell,
And when I am laid in my grave and at rest
My heart will live with you though cold in my breast.

When I gaze on the portraits that hang in my room
It fills my heart full of the essence of gloom.
I weep, but for what? not the shade of a face,
But the original gone from my tender embrace.

By the side of a stream where the bright waters flow
Sleeps a little babe brother who died years ago.
His spirit took flight in his babyhood morn
A number of years before I was born;

In boyhood I 've wandered through under the trees,
To list to the hum of the wild honeybees,

On the lone shady bank where the green willows wave,
Where he sleeps by the side of his grandfather's grave.

By the side of a stream where the Grand Rapids roll
Lies another dear brother beneath a green knoll.
No kindred is near him—he sleeps there alone,
Far from the hearth of his old native home.

While fond hearts were waiting around the old hearth
To welcome him back to the home of his birth,
A letter was coming, and soon it was read;
It told me, alas, that my brother was dead.

The beautiful sky and planets so fair
Look down on a grave in the town of Eau Claire,
Where lies a dear brother beneath a white stone,
Whose heart was as light as the distant sea foam.

The last time I saw him and bade him good bye
I did not imagine so soon he must die;
But death is a monster deceitful and bold,
And he stealeth our treasures more precious than gold.

Sleep on, brother, sleep in thy silent repose,
Beneath the perfume of the Wisconsin rose,
Where the wild ivies creep and the violets bloom
And drink the night dews on the breast of the tomb.

By the side of a lake, near the wave-beaten sand,
Is a green grassy grave in a far distant land,

That green, lonely mound friends never go nigh,
Nor the dew ever drops from the tear bedimmed eye.

Once four of us stood by that dark, gloomy grave
And heard the wild roar of the pyramid wave—
Where the oriole warbles his sweetest wood notes
In sight of the sails of the Ludington boats.

One night in a dream which seem'd more like life,
I saw that dear brother in search of his wife;
I met him—he knew me—and quickly he smiled
And said, "I 'm in search of my wife and dear child."

His form seem'd so plain to my slumbering view—
His gold studded bosom and necktie of blue;
His long silken beard that laid on his breast,
And the little gold chain that was hooked to his vest.

In visions and dreams I oft see his face,
Though now he 's one less of my aged father's race,
For once there were ten, but now we are five—
Half in the tomb and half yet survive.

Sleep on, brother, sleep in thy silent repose
Beneath the perfume of the Michigan rose,
Where the breeze through the boughs of the tamaracks
roar
And the waves kiss the sand of Lake Michigan's shore.

At the foot of a hill where the evergreens grow
Sleep three of my kindred—all three in a row;
My parents and sister, whom God called away
In the months of October, November and May.

Dear kindred, sleep on in thy silent repose
Beneath the perfume of the Lycoming rose:
Soon my bier shall be borne beneath the tall birch,
And I 'll sleep at your side by the little white church.

One sister, three brothers, have fled from my view,
But death comes so often it seems nothing new.
It took my aged mother and father so dear,
What reason for me longer to tarry here?

And should I be next to resign my frail breath,
To fathom the depths of the mystery Death,
This record I 'll leave you, this tale I impart,
Ere the blood becomes frozen that 's warming my heart.

Oh why were my kindred so scattered abroad?
There 's none that can tell but the true-living God!
Or, why was I made to weep and to mourn?
Or, why died I not in my babyhood morn?

Dear children, I 've finished—the story is told.
Pray do not forsake me, then, when I am old,
For then I 'll be needing your cherishing care
Till my soul floats away on a bubble of air.

1879.

TO MY BABY, ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

Mary Alice, baby dear,
Divine permission brought thee here—
Infant flower, tender bud,
A fragment of my flesh and blood.

Born May 18th, 1882.

TO MY BABY, ON HER DEATH-DAY.

Mary Alice, bud of May,
God has taken thee away—
Robbed us of our little love,
To adorn His throne above.

Died May 17th, 1885.

AT MY BABY'S GRAVE.

TO MY BELOVED WIFE.

O baby, my baby, thy presence I miss,
Except in sweet dreamland, where all is false bliss;
There I meet thee and greet thee on the velvety green,
But awake I but weep o'er the joy of my dream.

The death of my darling has strengthened my trust,
And I long to lie down by her side in the dust,
Where dreams of her presence no more shall beguile
My soul to false pleasure of seeing her smile.
Whenever I look at her sweet photograph
It seems I can hear the ring of her laugh—
It seems I can see that blue tint in her eyes
Like encircles the far-twinkling stars of the skies.
I never set eyes on a little child now,
Or toy with the locks that hang o'er its brow,
But it kindles a flame of affections of yore
Which burns in my heart to its innermost core.

When the angel of life bursts the bar of the tomb,
And my baby looks up from her chamber of gloom
To witness the dawn of eternal daylight,
It will seem that she only has slept for a night.

Should hope prove a falsehood, death eternal sleep,
O then I have reason sufficient to weep—
To weep for my baby who 's lost from my sight
In the deep-mocking darkness of eternal night.
But a sweet spirit teaches such reason is vain,
For my babe will come back to my bosom again,
And her presence will heal up the wound in my breast
When we meet face to face in that home of the blest.

"I would not live alway," I dread not the way
Where corruption shall nurse at the breast of decay,
For from that sound slumber where dreams never come
Angels shall wake me and welcome me home;
When the dew of the morning besprinkles the plain
And the meadow lark warbles his musical strain,
I 'll lovingly nestle my face in the bloom
Of the roses that grow on my sweet baby's tomb,
And there in deep silence I 'll think of the past,
My once happy home (too happy to last),
Of my joys and my sorrows, my hopes and my fears,
And I 'll drench the red clover with wine of my tears.

O sleep, baby sleep, may thy slumbers be sweet
'Neath the green grassy turf where torrent rains beat;
Though the blue lightnings flash and the loud thunders
roll
They disturb not the peace of my sweet baby's soul.

THE WHIPPOORWILL

O mournful bird of midnight muse,
O tell me, tell me, what 's the use
Of harping, harping "whippoorwill,"
When Will lies here so cold and still?

Thy music hath no charms for those
Who sleep beneath the blooming rose;
Then why sing on the garden gate
And make this home more desolate?

If when another summer 's come
Thou wingest here to seek a home,
Go to the graveyard on the hill,
And there pour out thy "whippoorwill."

There canst thou sit on sculptured stone
And sing at midnight, all alone;
Sing to the blazing stars above;
To her, beneath, whose life was love:

Or seek some soft and downy green
Along the lone complaining stream,
And then when other birds are still
Yield up thy taunting "whippoorwill."

Thy shrill song makes my flesh to creep,
My eyes to droop, my heart to weep,
And through my soul there runs a chill
Caused by thy mournful "whippoorwill."

Thou daring bird of midnight gloom!
My love lies dead within this room!
How durst thou choose her window sill
And harp thy doleful "whippoorwill"?

Why break my momentary rest?
My heart is bursting in my breast!
My hand can no more guide the quill—
O cease, O cease thy "whippoorwill"!

DORA BELMONT'S DYING REQUEST.

"Mother, I've been sweetly dreaming
Of a fairer land than this,
Where celestial lights are gleaming
O'er a world of boundless bliss.

"And I heard the angels singing
All around this downy bed,
Telling me that they were bringing
Wreaths of glory for my head.

"While my flying spirit lingers
And my palsied hands are warm
Take the gold rings from my fingers
And the bracelet from my arm.

"For I deem it, friends, thy duty
To take these gems and save;
I would not have their golden beauty
Tarnish with me in the grave.

"To the grave do not consign them;
When the band of angels come,
I would to God they would not find them
Hidden with me in the tomb.

"Mother, weep not o'er my illness,
Sing some grand immortal song,
Drive away this midnight stillness,
For I cannot linger long.

"With fragrant flowers trim my casket,
Place some lilies in my hand,
Fetch some pansies from the basket—
They will know and understand.

"Let my grave be in the valley,
Near the spot where I was born,
Where the murmuring streamlets dally
By the fields of waving corn.

"Place a monument above me,
Plant some violets on my tomb,
'T will be witness that you love me
While I sleep beneath their bloom.

"Raise the curtain—let no shadow
Rest between the skies and me;
Let me see the moonlit meadow—
Oh, 't is vain! I cannot see.

"Come and listen to me, sister,
Wipe the moist drops from my brow,
Catch this last fond feeble whisper
From my pallid cold lips now.

"Mother, I am fainter growing;
Clasp me to thy heart again;
My warm blood has ceased its flowing;
I am past the sense of pain.

"O, the bliss—the bliss of dying!
Place thy warm hand on my brow—
O, look, mother—angels flying;
Kiss me—I am dying now."

October 6, 1884.

DEATH OF DORA BELMONT.

How sad that one so beautiful must die;
She passed away as all must pass away,
As a golden cloud that lingers in the sky,
Or as a flower that blooms but for a day.

All read her heart within her happy face,
To which the smiles came ever all unbidden,
And lo, there Death had left no earthly trace
Save smiles of sorrow that she would have hidden.

But so it is all thro' life's flowery field—
Each day the scythe of Death swings round and round,
And all within his grasping reach must yield
And swell his harvest in the silent ground.

Pure as th' snow undriven, a damsel fair,
Prostrate she lay upon her silken couch;
But loving hands soon lifted her
To a soft and downy bed;
The raging fever came
And compassed her about,
And with the pain she paid
Her entrance into Heaven.

Days and nights rolled on,
Filled up their cups of pain and fled—
Each wrought a torturing picture there
To please the eye of Death.
Her loving mother came unto her side
And bow'd in holy prayer.
While friends flock round her in the gloom
She asks them all to sing, to sing
Some simple touching song.
They sing, and in their song they sob
And sigh, and when the anthem ends
The place within is silent as the grave,
While midnight stillness now prevails,
And busy insects sit and flit
Upon the window sill; the spider,
True unto his charge, within some crevice hid
Keeps up the death-watch tick
Until a sigh disturbs him in his glee,
Then slow, but louder still, the beat
Again begins, and all impressed
By his sad song begin to think of death,
For he with horror fills the hearts of all
Who hear him sing.

She calls her sister now; she calls
Once more, and the dew of death
In crystal drops is gath'ring on her brow.
Death's cold chill hath touched her hands,

Her whispers grow more faint,
Her breathing quicker grows,
Her eyes glow brighter still;
She smiles—she sees an angel band;
Her bosom falls at last;
Loud sobs break thro' the silence of the night—
Dora Belmont is dead.

The morning dawns; but at the dawn
What darkness hovers 'round!

Those who watched the lonely dead
Now homeward take their way,
But the sweetest songs of birds that rise
Fall doleful, sad and drear.

The weary hours wear away until
The silver sun hangs in the scale of noon.
The casket has arrived, whose glittering awe
Starts tears to all who gaze upon it.
Strong men bear it to the room where lies
The slumbering dead; they look
Upon the marble face and weep, weep
Bitter tears as they had never wept before.
Once more they take a look—a farewell look,
And then, with tearful eyes and whisp'ring voice,
Do silently depart.

The fly, unconscious of his guilt,
Descends from ceiling high, alights

Down on her pallid lips, then laughs
Unto himself to see two fair, white hands
All ribbon-bound across a silent breast.
The watch-dog howls at yonder gate
As if his brutish heart did know;
He scents the track of death, and to and fro
Around the house he hunts him,
Till perchance a door is oped—he gains
Admittance to the side of his lost friend.
He raises up and looks into her face
And weeps and whines, and leaping from the dead
Turns round and round, then lies him down
To keep his vigil.

The sun is sinking in the west,
The evening 's drawing nigh,
The cow-bells tinkle on the distant hill
And barefoot boys are hastening
Homeward to bring the herd.

'T is night; now universal darkness
Veils the hills and valleys;
The whippoorwill begins to sing
His mournful midnight monody
And still increase disquietude
For those who weep and mourn.
The moping owl doth seem to grieve
On yonder mountain-brow,
While desolation spreads her sombre wings

Over that blighted home.
The golden moon and silvery stars
Their light refuse to lend,
The distant thunders rumble in the west
And chain-like lightning glare illumes
The approaching storm. The rain
Begins to patter on the panes,
The howling wind subdues the sound
Of every sorrowing sob, and everywhere
The cannonading atmosphere bombards
The sable night. The timid night-bird now
Has hushed his mournful lay; a night
Of terror reigns, until the dawn doth bid
The slumbering world awake, and heaven draws
The reins and checks the mighty storm.

The Sun begins to gild the hill
And gentle breezes fan the waving corn,
As weary, worn-out winds do kiss
The bosom of a lazy stream.

Pensively pass the hours.

The heartless hearse, whose beauty dreadful glitters
Beneath the high-weeping sun,
Stops at the cottage door, and many loads
Of sorrowing kin complete the funeral train.

The church-bell tolls from yonder towering spire,
And tolling there it tells a tale of death—

The death of one so beautiful,
Who died so young, whose life was love.

The hallowing hymn is sung,
And friends flock 'round the dead.
Her loving mother comes, and looks
Down on the lifeless clay
Of her fair child, and there discerns
A smile on Dora's dear dead face,
The smile that Dora left for her
When leaving this cold world she caught
A glimpse of that which is to come.
She bows down o'er that sacred clay of hers,
Presses a warm kiss on those lips so cold,
And there she sheds enough of tears
To quench an angel's thirst.

For there lies (shackled in the icy chains
Of Death) all that loving mother's hopes,
All her joy on earth; and soon, too soon,
The cold clods of the valley shall resound
The sealing of the everlasting truth
Of "Dust thou art and unto dust
Shalt thou return."

Thou shalt not wake
Nor be disturbed in thy lone slumber till
The dawn of day eternal break on earth
And Heaven's tinkling cymbals call up all
The sleeping world to its account.

NOVEMBER, 1884.

ANNA BREEN.

DIED AT ASTONVILLE, FEBRUARY 22, 1884, AGED 15 YEARS, 11 MONTHS AND 13 DAYS.

[Friends, weep not o'er the cottage of her sweet spirit. She could no longer dwell within its frail walls, and now she's free to walk where mortal feet have never trod—the grand expanse of Heaven's amaranthine green.]

Beautiful in death she lay,
With Bible in her hand:
Her gentle spirit winged away
Unto that brighter land.

We lingered by her bed awhile:
We knew that death was nigh;
Still, after death she wore the smile,
As when we bade good-bye.

Ah, dearest friends, pray do not weep
Over her mortal clay;
Dear Anna's only gone to sleep,
Some spirit seems to say.

She called her loving parents nigh,
She called them once again,
She wanted them to see her die,
And free from mortal pain.

Beautiful in death, I said;
It seems to me a dream;
O, can it be that she is dead,
Sweet little Anna Breen?

THE LOVER'S LAMENT.

That love was mine, that sacred love
Which binds two hearts so strong,
But since my loved one lives above,
O God! how sad my song.

O, thou wanderer of the distant skies,
Thou companion of the radiant stars,
"Though lost to sight, to memory dear!"
Seest thou thy lover's lonely wingless form—
This mortal spark of blasted love?

O, could I kneel down by thy grave
And nestle my face in the morning dew
That gathers o'er thy mouldering form,
There would I refresh the flowery soil
With tears, and weep my soul away
To an eternal world with thee.
—Sad thought, begone! why wilt thou so disturb
My peace in naming one that hence hath gone?

Gone from my fond embrace, forever gone!
Gone to the lonely grave, dark cavern of the dead!
That silent vault of dayless gloom!

Could I but kiss thy lips once more,
Even though cold and clammy now
Within the silvered casket walls, 't would be
Honey unto my lips and to my soul
Sweet consolation; thou once fairest to mine eyes,
And dearest to my heart: but thou art gone,
To quench the hunger of a cold devouring grave.

O thou inhabitant of that distant bourne,
Seest thou thy lonely lover wandering
By shady brook, through leafy lawn and green,
Where we in happiest days together roamed?
Had I a pen made from a quill outplucked
From wings as fair as thine, my angel love,
I 'd steep it in my warm heart's blood
And o'er the snow-white page in weeping ink
Portray a tale of never-dying love!

Why, cruel Death, of all our fleeting souls
The swift dispatcher, didst thou pilfer here
My heart and bear away its only jewel?
Can flowers amuse when Death demands,
When a loved one's spirit ebbs,
When all the hope of earthly bliss
Fades from a lover's view?

No! Flowers, fields, the distant green-robed hills,
The red and golden-curtained skies will seem
But scenes of sombre hue before our weeping eyes.
But how swift th' thought from Heaven falls
That here on earth consoles! for while the darts
Of lightning pierce the sable clouds, and rain
In torrents beats upon thy lone neglected grave,
I'll court thee in my midnight dreams
And thus our sacred love renew.

O thou fragment severed from my soul,
Where dost thou wing thy way to-night?
Along the margin of the moon, or still
Conversing with the stars, hurled high
Upon the whirlpool of the wind,
Or at my chamber door, or fluttering there
Over my couch? Oh, tell me, in my dreams;
Come robed in all thy glory,
Tell me some celestial story,
For I've pondered o'er the myst'ry
Of death in all its scenes;
Tell me why the God above us
Calls away the ones that love us,
And our love for them grows stronger
As we see them in our dreams!

Oh, Melissa, hear my pleading,
While my heart within me's bleeding,

While this fire within my bosom
  Flames of love for thee outpour;
Hear my lonely, sad entreating,
While the rain the panes keeps beating,
While the leaping lightning flashes
  And the thunders crash and roar.

Let thy sacred spirit lead me,
On the wine of heaven feed me,
That I may meet and greet thee
  On the glittering golden shore—
In that glorious long forever,
Where there is no death to sever,
Where thou 'lt meet thy weary lover
  To part with nevermore.

Sacred spirit, come unto me,
Draw the darts thy death thrust through me,
Tear this sorrow from my bosom,
  Whisper words of sacred love;
For I 'm lonely, sad, forsaken,
Since from me thy soul wast taken,
Since thou 'st gone to live with angels
  In that spirit world above.
Though the grave to-night doth hide thee,
What on earth have I beside thee,
What in heaven but thy spirit
  To guide me to that goal

Where there is no dread of dying,
No sorrow, sin or sighing,
Where all is bliss eternal
For the weeping, weary soul?

1877.

THE DRUNKARD'S DREAM.

[This composition originally appeared in the Williamsport *Breakfast Table.* Its publication was prefaced by the editor of that paper with the following:

"This article was composed by an engineer. He has never had the benefits of an education, but is a devoted reader and writes considerably. Some of his pieces have appeared in the *Breakfast Table* before. The piece printed here is certainly beautiful, and we are bold enough to declare that parts of it would not disgrace the versatility of Shakspeare or the imagery of De Quincy."]

O tempting wine, thou art the key
That unlocks the gates to misery!

How beautiful thou wert within the glaring glass,
Though thou wert the very liquid dye
That branded my poor soul; that kept me from
The pedestal of fame and plunged me down
Headlong into this deep infernal gulf
Where serpents coil around my limbs and sting
My soul to death.
To death?
Ah, no; were this but death—no more,

Soon could I fly the curse; but thoughts like these
Are agony, for such a joy
Can never shine within these realms of woe.

Mortality is gone, and yet I live
'Mid shrieks of penetrating pain
Where scorpions' stings are never healed
And serpents' fangs are never dulled.
Oh, could I a dream have dreamed like this,
That warning given may have been—
That which forbade my feeble hand convey
The glittering juice unto my guileless lips,
What infelicity I had missed.

To touch the glass! to drain the fiery dregs
Is that which slaves the appetite and o'erpowers
The reason and doth stamp the hateful mark
Of execration on the tender heart.

Oh, what fearful cogitations haunt me here
Where the eternal wheels of this dread machinery
Grind and groan and mock my wailing woe,
Where triumphs dampen and the dismal smoke
Of eternal vengeance blinds me where I look!
What webs of wonder do unravel here—
Here in this fathomless abyss! what misery
Lurks in these stings; alas, calamity
Hath got me in his grasp and holds me close;
Satanic schemes are carried into direful effect

And "Pain doth paint Death's portrait true."
Am I rational, or is my comprehension blind?
Is this not an idle dream? But how can dreams
Of flesh and blood converse with immortality?
Nay! impossible! Death doth eclipse the view.

O, how changed from that blest time
When wings of reason hovered o'er my soul,
When a mother's kiss and holy hymn
Lulled my childish brain to sleep!
—But where am I to-day? Companion
Of the blazing flame 'mid the roaring lullaby
Of hell, and recipient of a thousand kinds
Of agony combined.

My skein of life's unwound, my breath
Is breathing out, but the end will never come,
For this the breath eternal can ne'er unwind
From off the immortal spool.
Have not my tortures told the tale?
Then, why wilt thou swallow down
The dreadful drug that's steeped
In hell's distillery? Mortality alone
Can bind what mortality has undone.

O, what truths have been solidified
To warn me from the pit!
E'en Heaven hath plead by prayer
Through an aged paternal breast,

But prayer availeth nothing now,
For I have missed the goal. I've built upon
A rotten base, made imagination
My most welcome guest, held the reins,
Rode forth in phantom chariots and
Forced on the steeds of vice
When gospel darts did pierce my heart
And tears did blind my eyes.

In the scale of meditation I have weighed
The mystery of my mortal existence,
But my weightiest thoughts have failed to tip the beam;
And hence my feeble conscience failed,
The cursed corrosive wine
Hath poisoned every crimson drop within my throbbing veins,
Did lacerate my heart and perforate my brain
Till reason fled and leaped
From off the end of my premature gray hairs,
And my staggering form was left
To tumble in the ditch, where direful apprehensions
Took hold with dread delirium, and the dew of death
In crystal drops gathered upon my brow.

Can this be death? And is this death
The end of man? No! 't is but casting off
The mortal bonds to give the soul
Eternal scope within the gateless walls of woe.
Oh, what miseries here untold,

Where frightened spirits dive and dart
To free themselves from pain.
Poor mortal man, what infelicities
Art thou born to share, when once the trap is sprung,
Redemption's veil is rent in twain
And the golden gloss of thy last lingering hope
Is stained with dye indelible!

O, turn ye from the bar, the bar-room
Bar; that bar which bars and bolts you
From the vestibule of heaven; that bar
Which Satan's agents seek to purchase
Souls for hell. Turn ye from the
Parlor walls—from the enchanting
Lyrist—where men are lulled
And lose their sense by the siren
Songs of jeering jades; where glass
To glass is heard to clash in
Tendering toasts to hell, where
Morality 's destroyed and bickering
Oaths convulse the lips, then
Burst upon the air.

Oft have I lain in the mire and cast
My eyes toward the eternal skies
And there beheld the golden midnight moon
Watching over my prostrate form.
She seemed to weep, and covered her face
With veils of mist, and her bright reflections

Companioned then no more my bloodshot eyes;
But now I lurk within the eternal walls
And cast my spiritual eyes on the far-off beautiful earth
Where once I dwelt, and there, beneath
The breeze-bent boughs, I see the dismal spot—
The lonely mound, where all my flesh and blood
Still slumbering lie. No epitaph I earned,
Hence nature's hewn stone tells not my name nor age,
But stands to-day a stumbling block for hungry grazing
beasts.
Oh, could my soul be annihilated
Or crushed (as God blots out the stars),
What momentary happiness the thought would bring;
Or could I return to earth and
There with flesh and blood unite,
I'd spend in prayer the measure of my years, and
Kneel at last beside some murmuring stream
Low in the vale between the towering hills
Where fragrance of the sweetest flowers floats on
To kiss and be a part of every breeze,
And "there, in conscience of my guilt,
Offer up my soul to God, that life immortal
In full day might forever shine."

NERCHINC REPROVED

FOR ACCUSING GOD OF INJUSTICE TO MAN.

Man disobeys and wastes his strength,
And alas! lays down his body's length,
While kindred shed their tears;
But did we live as God designed
To dust we would not be consigned
For ten and three score years.

Wise nature's law we violate
And thus untimely seal our fate
When half life's race is run;
And yet we hear frail mortal man
Condemn God's great and glorious plan,
And alas, cry out—undone!

Sighs may soothe and sorrows fly away,
But murmuring man! oh, why accuse
Divinity for what thou art? What gifts
Hath God bestowed on thee! Oh, why
Complain, and while complaining fear
To break the hair-hung breath which links
Thee to the world? Thyself an image
Of our great Creator, born to serve
Divine decree, why murmur at

The tenor of a song, or bow in tears
To strains of holier hymn? Why wed to sin
To claim inheritance to crime and cultivate
The bitter germ of all corrosive joy?
Why (still complaining in the dark) shut out
The star of hope?

Black clouds may overcast and darts
Of lightning leap and kiss the
Cloud-capped, towering hills, and collapsing atmosphere
May cannonade the skies; yet each day destroys,
And while the lease of life still holds and dissolution stares;
But man regards it not and builds
Upon a crumbling base until he yields
To suicide to alleviate
Remorse. Why mark a blank the matchless love
Which Deity designed to soothe?
Why mock at God's own words to man?
Or what to thee when wearied Nature sits
And seeks in vain a place for her to rest?
Too late 't is then to unload thy pack of sin
Such as the burdened Bunyan bore,
Too late then to revoke the scoffing word
That faith may be repaired!

What beauties dwell in hope when hope is built of Faith
And founded on a grand immortal base:
Then mortal mind ascends to higher realms
Where th' eternal glittering constellations daze

The human sight and tips of angels' wings
Fringe all the star-lit skies; but while heaven smiles
Hell puts forth a frown and mongrel man
Is prone to disobey; yet faith secured
Conquers the dread of death as sunbeams do
Consume the dampness of a summer day.

Why fancy that a lingering hope is nigh,
Or send thy mind afloat on imaginative streams
To snatch more troubles from life's fretful waves?
Man measures every day from youth to age,
But Nature's laws we violate
And live the less of days.
Too dull to spy a flaw within ourselves,
We reason with the wrong until we think
All we have learned is right, and yet we dread
To quit the brink from which humanity
Must leap; we dare not go
For fear we fall in flames.

We triumph in a dream and still awake
To disappointment. We master not
The subtle venturous thoughts of our grand minds.
We master not ourselves; and conscious of our guilt
We fail to find that loftier orb
Where spirits throng the grand expanse
Of Heaven's amaranthine green,
Where red nor golden autumn tint
Do ever stain a leaf.

Choose, choose, O man, that heaven-erected hope
Which takes the vital spark that dies in thee!
Unbar the compass pointing to the stars
And Heaven's revealed design; approach thy God!
Survey the golden pilgrim's-path
Which legions long have trod.

Why grasp at phantoms? Why consult
A reason so unripe, or run the risk
To guide the steeds of truth with reins
Of empty air? Why 'grave an epitaph
Of doom upon the tables of thy heart?
Why purchase guile to gild thy gloom,
Or dare to trample on the fringe
Of gospel robes?

Man envies that he never can attain,
While sweet bouquets of bliss that he may reach
He never thinks to touch.

Each day a new life is, each night a death,
Each morn a resurrection
From nights of dreams, unconsciousness
Of life's reality, in which the mind
Wanders through midnight darkness:
The eyes survey some grand untrodden green
And at each breath a balm of ecstasy
Our lips inhale; but th' silent night departs
To darken spheres away, the silent eyes

Ope to behold the light of new-born day.
How vain the vision past! how vain
Our visit to the world, compared
With dreams of sable night!

"Oh, what grand surveys of destiny divine
When death explodes the involving cloud
And eternal day shines forth." Oh then why wish
To sit on thrones and reign as earthly kings,
When in the dust are kings and paupers equalized?
Seek not to emulate or reach beyond
Thy finger's length to fasten unto Fame,
For weary-worn are the hands that dig
Diamonds from the dust. Despise not falling tears
Of those who lowly weep, for such baptize
The heart, seek the windows of the soul, bathe
Each glassy sphere, trickle down the walls
Of sorrow's tenement, and vanish from our sight.

Open thy heart! Set thy wishes wide!
Let in manhood, let in happiness, amid
The boundless theatre of thought, for swift
The shafts of time revolve that roll us into dust.
Man flies from Time and Time from man,
Alas! too soon in sad divorce must end
This double flight—in death must end,
A death to one, to each, but once—a sad
And silent problem still unsolved by mortal man.
How keen the edge of coming time

That cuts the vital cord and drops
The blinding curtain on the scene
Where we are actors on the stage
Of God's most grand and glorious theatre.
What is hung here beneath the sun—
Beneath Heaven's blazing chandelier!
How deeply rooted are our kindred ties
And yet how quickly doth the cable break
And reason immaterial flies, ascends
To that mysterious region whence it came.
We drive away the moments with a serious song
And dream of distant glory just beyond,
And in that dream we dream it is no dream,
But fancy all is real, what time the dawn
Proclaims our disappointment when we wake.

True aim and effort win the prize at last,
Subdue the fear of Death and draw the sting
From out the bleeding heart; the chains
Of villany and pride cast off,
And man walks on contented through
The garden of his God, and day by day
Awaits the summons from on high which may break
Upon the soul at every breeze.

Nerchinc! Wilt thou give ear
Unto the counsel of a worm,
The music of an untaught tongue, a voice
That ne'er by man was tuned to sing a solemn song?

Thou mayst have heard a sweeter song
Than here I 've seemed to sing—
A song where sweet angelic tones have trembled
On the silver strings—a song
Where notes of airy sweetness rolled
From brass vibrating tongues combined—
A song of thoughts borne from the skies to lull a troubled
mind.

But here the tenor endeth of my song;
Here are the pris'ners of my heart set free
To dance upon the drums of thy two mortal ears,
Set free to crack the glaze upon thy hardened heart!
Set free to warn ere death doth burst the bounds
Of all thy mortal being and thou 'rt hurled
Adown the corridors of woe headlong
Where spirits pace the dark expanse
Of eternity's abyss—where never-dying
Groans resound, and ever-yawning hell
Awaits another soul.

1880.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

When all the world is cradled for the night
And the laborer folds his hands across his breast,
His soul, in pleasant dreams, will take its flight,
While the weary worn-out body lies at rest.

Much to man hath been revealed to make
Him wise and good; but that which wrings the heart
Is thought of death: sad theatre it is
Where men would fight the demon of the soul
In maddening midnight dreams. And yet oftwhile
In whirl of giddy dance the thought of death
Will seize the soul of him who never heard
A dying groan, and lead him thence away,
A better man.
Oh, dreadful bearing weight,
This thought of death! which doth unman a man
And break the cable of the soul.
Full oft
In fright the fearful rabbit and the roe
Within the pleasant groves of sacred shade
Have started to their feet for slightest sound
Of rustling leaves beneath the capering feet
Of squirrels; but natural instinct tells to them,
Bred in their pretty breasts, a tale of death,

And bids them speed away. But man will scale
The winding stairs that reach a kingdom's dome
To drag a nation's towering banners down,
And die a daring fool! and for his thirst
Of empty fame drives out the fear of death,
Exchanging immortality for name
And title placed upon fair monuments
For whispering winds to kiss.

In humble huts
There dwells a lonely class unschooled whose lives
Invite the scorn of others happier born;
Within their souls the love of simple things
Shines as the fullest moon; their deeds are carved
On golden leaves beyond the distant sun.
These be the treasures of their God; to them
Comes Death all welcome; they are wafted off
By wind from angels' wings; for social thongs
Ne'er bound them in the grasping net of sin.

On fiery chariots whose huge iron lungs
Expand with heated breath, there rides a class
Of men who hold a hundred human lives
Within their faithful hands. And Nature's law,
Stronger than sinewy hands, at times defied
Hurls the dull monster till it reels and rolls
And he who gave it breath lies dead and still
Beneath the iron wheels. At morn he kissed

The little ones at home, who wait in vain
The absent one that promised to return.
A hero—and a man; no monument
For him.

Within the damp and woful walls
Of death-like dayless gloom, there lives a class
Of men condemned, who note the fleeting hours
And dread to sleep for fear of awful dreams—
Men whom the lust of gold seduced from good.
Who did delight to whet the assassin's knife.
In vain they seek some avenue to light;
Darker and darker still the darkness grows
And only disappointment still they find.

To die—to bid adieu to this green earth,
To be adorned with flowers and be called
By name and have no power to reply;
To be the dear-loved dead and warmly kissed,
Still all unknowing; this warm bed to leave
For a grave in the open field, and there to lie
In darkness still at midnight and at noon
With perfumed rose and pansy overhead,
To be corruption and the birth-place of the worm;
Ah, to pass the dread ordeal seems hell sufficient!

April 24, 1884.

POVERTY'S CHILD.

I loved him when a baby,
When he played upon the floor,
And I loved him when I met him
As I did in days of yore,
And I 'll love him when he struggles
To retain his fleeting breath;
And as I have loved the world will love
Him ages after death.

When years have linked into a lengthy chain,
How grand it is to meet a man we knew
In infancy!

The cup of time, which holds a year when even full,
Had emptied nearly forty times
Into the gulf of time since I beheld his
Laughing face. How changed his feature
And his form! But his nature was the same.

He had passed the mid-day of his life,
The silver threads were visible in ringlets round his brow,
But not on account of vile or vicious deed,
Nor for virtues voluntarily slain.

Fond nature marked and molded him
A melancholy man, and marked him
With a master mind, but strong were
The struggles with which he strove to free
Himself from poverty's pendant power.
But alas! he had missed the golden
Opportunity which seems to fit the mind
With loftiest thoughts and lasting theme,
And yet there seemed brooding in his boyish brain
Tremendous thoughts like one whose master mind
Was mightier than the misanthropes who manage mangonels.

Oft within the wood upon some old decaying log
Or mountain ledge he sat alone
Within the shade, with here and there
A spot of sunny gold which to and fro
Did seem to move in quick obedience
To the breeze, while the starry eyes
Of little birds stared strangely at his form;
They were his happy halcyon days
Which have flown away so fast.
From day to day, with friends of youth,
He roamed the forests wild, but there were none
Who knew his thoughts or volunteered
To interview the nature of his mind—
That mind which would have melted into gold,
For all it lacked was some alloy
Its crudeness to destroy.

Oft behind the plow I saw him plod
When beads of perspiration decked his boyish brow
And footprints of his brown bare feet
Adorned the land he trod.
When tinkling bells and babbling brooks,
Red-breasted birds and busy bees,
Sent forth their music on the breeze,
I heard his young, sweet voice echo from
The forest green, as to the towering hill he hied
To homeward bring the herd.

When all the birds and busy insects
Had ceased to sing their songs
And quiet night had thrown her sombre mantle
O'er the hills and vales, I saw him sit in silent muse
Before the humble hearth of home,
Puzzled at his own existence, now and then a question
Asked his mother, whose peace in holy writ's peruse
Seemed hardly disturbed.

I saw him sitting by the brook
In the sunny month of May, and heard him whistle
While he whet his jack-knife's shining blade,
With which he whittled water-wheels to whirl them in the stream.

Great was his hope, which heaped his courage high;
But alas! bold poverty did pluck
The plume of hope from his fair brow,
Closed the college gates, and hunger turned

The key. Thus one of nature's brightest buds
Was blasted ere it bloomed.

Long-lingering nights he labored hard
In search of long-forgotten lore,
And turned the yellow pages o'er and o'er
Until fond nature's sweet restorer lulled
His childish brain to sleep.

His hopes seemed firm and fixed on future fame,
But phantoms at the end. O,
Had assistance come in time, what effulgent flames
Had flashed forth from his brain.

Near forty years had rolled away
When I strolled along the city street, and there
Perchance I met a man who held
A package in his hand, and there I learned
His name, for it was written on the wrapper
That was wrapped around the roll.
I read the name and asked the man,
"What holdest thou within thy hand?"
His answer came in feeble voice:
"It is my unfinished letter to the world,
For I am weary of the world, and I long
For that sound slumber which I shall inherit
At that day when I shall launch this frail bark
Upon the bosom of the eternal river,
And like the dying swan, drift away
To death, lulled by the music of her own sweet song."

THE WHITE SLAVE.

Why was I born a poor white slave,
To toil my life away?
Why not have filled an infant's grave
And been at rest to-day?

But thus it is from humble birth
We walk down sorrow's lane,
Where all the joys of this green earth
Are recompensed with pain.

But when I fall beneath the sway
Of death's relentless rod,
An angel then will point the way
And lead me on to God.

While here I sit alone pondering
O'er the welfare of our liberty and love of home,
There come to me
Some memories of by-gone days—
Days in which I played my part
Upon the blood-stained plain;
And in my memory I view
The smoky pictures of the past and wonder still
If this is I—I who once fought for liberty
And freedom for the colored slave.

'T is twenty years or more since the war-whoop
Of the brave zouave echoed along the broad Potomac's
shores,
Where Alexandria's peaceful spires point
To the star-lit skies. 'T was there the fluttering flag
Of rebeldom was torn from the towering dome
And carried down a fancy flight of stairs
And drenched with Ellsworth's blood.
I, too, fought to free the colored slave;
But where am I to-day? Ah! the "White Slave"
Of the wealthy class who gain
Their fortunes by the blood of helpless, hapless souls.
My children sleep upon the hill within
Their narrow house, unmarked by name
On marble slab or nature's hewn stone,
While here I gaze on one half clad in tattered frock;
Yet she seems happy and sings a song
Which none can learn save the sweet angelic throng.
In innocence, begrimed with filth for want
Of a penny's worth of soap and a mother's tender care,
She sits upon a pile of dirt,
Laughing as the summer breeze sways to and fro
Her golden locks of matted hair.
But wife and mother, O where art thou?
Go look into yon chamber lighted by
A single pane: there lies my wife upon
A hard husk bed, languishing in pain,
Weeping in sorrow,

And praying for the icy hand of death
To free her from a cold, unfriendly world.
O God! can this be liberty? Can this
Be the land for which our forefathers fought,
Bled and died that their posterity
Might be free from a tyrant's heavy tread?
No! 't is the land of the "White Slave;" the land
Where the song of the reaper tickles the ear
Of the foreign land owner; 'tis the land
Of ghouls and vast fortunes for the few.
But alas! when comfort comes for the poor white slave
'T is in the dead of night, when slumber's launched him
Into the realms of dreams, where we forget
The trials and troubles of the day; 't is then
We 're lulled by sweetest songs, enhanced by views
In that gay gold-lined abode
Above the land of slavery, where labor
Is not filched and beads of perspiration
Never deck the brow.

But the morning's dawn appears, and with that dawn
Disquietude begins, and all the happy
Dreamland scenes vanish from our sight.
Toil and turmoil, too, begin;
The slow progress of the day tells on the toiler's mind;
The lunch-pail, scantily filled with victuals coarse and rude,
Is set aside, for there 's no appetite
Its contents to demand. And lo!

The master of the slave, triumphant as he treads
The prison paths of treachery, on his morning beat starts
To minute every fault and his dread diary
With the tar of turmoil fill, and finally
Flings a veil of villany over
The tear-dimmed eye of him whose blood is red
With uncommon heat by honest daily toil;
And thus blackmails his name and drives him from his place.
Men meet and muse upon the street
And compliment the day, unmindful
Of the solemn fact that 't is slavery makes them move;
That slavery dug the glittering steel
From out the green-clad hills, that slavery
Made the gleaming sword and split the polished pen
That we as white born slaves might write a tale
To wend its way from pen to press,
From vales to mountain peaks, to echo from the doleful winds
And haunt the ears in every humble home.
Awake, ye white born slaves! awake,
Ye burdened, yoked and poverty-stricken brave!
Awake, ye gray-haired men! awake,
Ye mothers of your toiling sons! and wonder
No longer that nation's richly reaped
Oppression, slavery, tyranny and war.
Confusion stares me in the face and makes
Me weep and wail in pangs of wretched woe.

Half clothed and beggarly arrayed,
I wander to and fro in order to
Deceive the time—time which brings me naught
But pain—pain to my brain and bones.
But hence a hundred years this nation shall
Be changed, and all the tongues that lisp to-day
Shall be motionless and mute, and while monuments
Of brass and bronze erected for the moneyed men
Rear towers to the skies, the "White Slave" then
Will live at rest on rose and myrtle, lulled
With sweet angelic song; but when tyrants
Shall awake, who have oppressed the poor, and find
Themselves undone, what dreadful groans shall echo
From out their dying breasts; what terrors shall
Take hold upon their hearts; what sallow shades
Shall settle o'er their cooling clay;
What sombre winged angels shall lay
Them in the grave—they who once lived,
Moved, ruled and sneered the beggar as they passed.

TO A FRIEND.

O, life! how dear thy sweet existing shade, how little praised while here, how valuable when gone! What worlds of wonder here involved, here in a single life! We come into the world while all around rejoice, we slip away while all around us weep. The first step unaided by paternal hands is one toward the grave. Insidious death is on our track as the hound pursues the roe; he may be close at hand or sixty years behind. We played the part of happy childhood and passed to blooming youth in search of riper joys; we imagined manly power and wished that we were men; yet on the shoulders of a child rests the mighty world, its government and stocks, its bloody wars and revelry. From out the depths of days agone we draw those happy memories of pranks we played, or of an hour we spent beneath the mossy beech, on lovely green, with pretty maiden by our side, while the blazing sun, fixed in her grand unchanging orb, bound for the western horizon, left her cooling shadows gently fall on happy life beneath the sacred boughs. O, sweet memories! the plume of sacred joys; in vain we strive to pluck it from our hearts, by nature planted there for the noblest ends. Yet onward through the course of time, within our bosom hid, our sweetest thoughts are carried to the grave oft sullied by a tear.

Many a scheme we hung on silken webs and thought to fly with gaudy wings to fortune's fairest fields, thought to outwing the midnight raven in his flight and rest content 'mid gardens of jeweled lilies, where the feet of sorrow never trod, where joy had beat her golden path and the melody of mirth forever floats through gay life's leafy lawn. O, happy life! blest ordinance of God! shall we make it less than God ordained, soil the emblem of His mighty love and cheat ourselves of promised joy? We come this way but once, are passing on unto that shore beyond the history of man; then let us make our moments happy here, for happiness has no particular garb, nor are her guests a certain class, but she invites us, one and all, she bows and smiles to all who recognize her face. O, happy thought! blest moment that gave it birth, that man is monarch of his bliss or creator of his woe.

THAT SUNDAY IN DECEMBER.

A SKETCH.

It was Sunday, the 18th of December, 1881. The thermometer stood at temperate, the ground was bare, the sky was clear; not a cloud to be seen, save a little white vapor at the southern horizon. I think it was the most beautiful day for December that I ever knew. I

sat upon the steps that entered the south side of the old homestead barn, and as my eyes surveyed the fields where often I had followed the plow, swung the scythe, and raked the hay, it brought afresh to my mind my early days, those days that knew no trouble, no care, no trials. On the step beneath me sat an aged man whose locks were whitened by the frosts of seventy-eight winters. His brow was furrowed by the plowshare of time, his hands were brown and spare; his intellect was clear, and his conversation sweet.

We talked of by-gone days, but said little of the future, for I knew we would not journey together into the mysterious future. As I gazed on him I thought of the many words of holy counsel that had fallen from his lips, and I regarded him as my worldly and spiritual adviser. When I was a little child, at early dawn, when the sun gilded the mountains and the throats of a thousand birds seemed bursting with their songs, I followed him to the green fields, to the rippling brook and to the side-hill forests, for his very life was love, and wheresoever he went he scattered flowers of righteousness in my pathway, that I might be led by their sweet fragrance to follow him to that celestial land where no sorrows are.

When I last looked upon him he lay within his sepulchre; there was but little contrast between his whitened beard and the lace that lined his casket; but that sweet expression of his countenance seemed to say, "Follow me."

A DREAM OF MY FATHER'S DEATH.

AFTERWARD WITNESSED IN REALITY.

It was midnight—I was sleeping,
And I dreamed that I was weeping
O'er the death of one, my kindred,
  Whom so long I 'd loved so well;
And I saw a throng assemble,
And with grief my heart did tremble,
For they said they heard the tolling
  Of a solemn funeral knell.

Soon a friend came to me saying:
"In what chamber shall we lay him?"
And I answered, "In the chamber
  Where his spirit passed away."
Still I fathomed not the meaning
Of my sad and doleful dreaming,
Though with tears I thought it over
  Many a weary, weary day.

But one cold November morning
Then I recognized the warning,
The full interpretation
  Of the dream I 'd dreamed before;

And I soon fell into grieving,
As my heart began believing
That I 'd seen a spirit ebbing
Which I 'd know here nevermore.

Not a note of bird or cricket
Broke the silence of the thicket,
For 't was in the month November
And the trees their leaves had shed,
But while I sat in sorrow sighing
I beheld an angel flying
'Round about the humble chamber,
And it fluttered o'er his bed.

That night the radiant comet
Was blazing on the summit
Of Heaven's crystal palace,
Hung high above the earth;
And that angel came to take him
Up to Heaven, and there make him
An angel with the angels,
By a grand immortal birth.

The weary winds and sleeting
On my window panes kept beating,
Which made that lonely cottage
Seem more lonely than before.

Then I hurried to him nearer,
And he seemed to me much dearer
As I scanned the pallid countenance
My aged father wore.

His eyes were growing dimmer,
No more perceived the glimmer
Of the lamp that threw the shadows
On the humble cottage floor;
Then I sank in sorrow sighing,
For I knew that he was dying;
'T was the full interpretation
Of the dream I 'd dreamed before.

RALSTON, NOVEMBER 27, 1882.

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER.

JACOB B. HEYLMUN. BORN OCTOBER 3d, 1803; DIED NOVEMBER 26th, 1882.

He died as he had lived. His hope was built upon a grand immortal base; hence pale Death brought no clouds to darken his futurity. Such were his sentiments ere he resigned his frail breath for a happy transit to the skies.

MY MOTHER'S PRAYER.

TO MY CHILDREN.

Before I knew my letters,
Or learned to read and spell,
My mother taught me how to pray
To save my soul from hell.

Now since I've learned my letters,
And learned to read and write,
My mother's prayer comes to my heart
When I retire at night.

And I think sometimes from Heaven
There comes floating on the air
A voice which sounds like mother's,
When she used to kneel in prayer.

When my eyes have grown lightless,
And are hid from deathly glare,
I shall open them in Heaven
And see my mother there.

Take warning, darling children,
And avoid the tempter's snare,
By committing to your memory
Your loving mother's prayer.

DEATH OF MY BABY.

DIED.—At Langdon, Pa., January 31, 1887, of congestion of the lungs, James Warren, infant son of J. W. and Ida Heylmun, aged 1 month and 8 days.

SUNDAY MORNING.

Oh, what a doleful Sunday morning!
Void of a voice of mirth and joy,
For we received an awful warning
That death would claim our darling boy.

MONDAY MORNING.

"Tell us children, darling mother,
What is it that makes you cry?
Do you think that baby brother
Is so sick that he will die?"

MONDAY EVENING.

Children, gather round your mother,
Death his awful tale has told;
Kiss your little baby brother
Ere his little face is cold.

THE LITTLE FUNERAL.

Some six or seven wagons
Were coming down the road,
And among them was a carriage
Which bore a precious load.

"From whence come all these wagons?"
A friend unto me said.
"Oh, it is a little funeral—
A little child is dead."

They passed down through the village
And drove up to the hill,
And there they laid the baby
In its grave all cold and still.

The day was wild and dreary,
And the mourners were but few;
But Heaven's gates stood open
To let the baby through.

RALSTON, OCTOBER 15, 1886.

CORA AND ELSIE.

Little Elsie, last and only
Daughter of our little fold,
Now has left us sad and lonely,
Grasped in death's embrace so cold.

But we have this consolation:
Little Cora 's gone before,
And will welcome her with angels
On the glittering golden shore.

What a grand and happy meeting
When those little children meet,
Up where Christ is ever greeting
Little angels on the street!

A FATHER'S LAMENT.

There 's a spot that is dear to this heart in my breast,
Where the treasures God gave me now silently rest,
Where the sun in the evening climbs up the lone hill
And bids a good-night unto Montoursville.

How cold are the winds, how boist'rous the storms
That beat on the graves of the three little forms!
Cora our eldest pined, weakened and died,
And in less than six months Elsie slept by her side.

In dreams I can see them in white robes arrayed,
Can see them in life as together they played—
They meet me at midnight—I give each a kiss,
Then awake from my dream but to weep for lost bliss.

Death, in his contract, it seems did agree
To quit not his work 'till he stole the whole three;
Only poor Harry was left, our sweet babe,
To fulfill the agreement that grim Death had made.

How sad was my soul as I sat by his bed
And felt him grow cold as his sweet spirit fled;
It seemed that my heart would leap up from its place
As I gazed on the last one, my dead baby's face.

IN MEMORY OF SOME FLOWERS.

TO A LADY AND HER DAUGHTER, OF RALSTON, PA.

The flowers that you gave, friends,
To adorn a dear, dead child,
Were woven in a white bouquet
With other flowers wild,
And placed within her little hand
That lay across her breast,
And with her lowered in the tomb,
Where Elsie lies at rest.

I never shall forget, friends,
Her smiling little face,
As she lay so sweetly sleeping
Within her silvered case;
Her little hand seemed grasping
The lily and the rose;
But cruel death had rocked her
To a dreamless, sweet repose.

O may we meet that child, friends,
In the resurrection morn,
When the turf from off her little grave
By angel hands is torn—
May an angel band from Heaven
Find that lily in full bloom
When they raise dear little Elsie
From the cold and silent tomb.

THE STREAM.

TO C. S. WHEATON.

There 's a dear little stream near where I was born
That dallies and dances beneath the hawthorn;
That sings to the hemlocks and butternut trees,
While winding its way to the blue, rolling seas.

How sweet is its music which comes to my ear!
But along with that music comes many a tear;
For along the green banks and the pebbly shore
Of that murmuring stream I shall play nevermore.

When I lay down my viol and take up my book,
I still hear the song of that murmuring brook;
For to me there 's no music musicians can play,
Like the musical notes of the rippling spray.

I love it to-day as I did when a child—
The bubbles that bound from its bosom so wild;
And I love to lie down on the green velvet turf,
And there bathe my lips in its silvery surf.

When the fields and the forests are all in full bloom
I love to go there and inhale the perfume
Of the wild rose, the horse-mint, and sweet daffodil,
That bloom on the banks of that dear little rill.

The azalea, wild apple, entwining woodbine,
The trailing arbutus and foxberry vine—
All fling their sweet fragrance to float on the breeze
That sweeps through the boughs of the tall maple trees.

Can it be, when the heart becomes palsied and cold,
On a snowy white page its thoughts are still told?
O, bright little streamlet, forever flow on!
Thou wilt not perish though perish my song.

TO COUSIN HATTIE.

Thy kind letter is received
And with its contents I am pleased;
But pardon me—I must proclaim
No flattery can make me vain.

For nature filed her frugal claim
And gave to me an honest name,
A tender heart, a willing hand,
And poetry too at my command.

Then how can flattery make me vain?
'T is not for fortune nor for fame
That I have written; but to bind
A flowery wreath of mortal mind.

'T is when the tears rush to my eyes
I snatch those beauties from the skies
And place them on the snow-white page,
That they may live from age to age.

When crystal frost doth girt the globe
And all is clothed in winter's robe
And I asleep beneath the sod,
My spirit then shall be with God.

For God hath given it to me,
This spirit tinged with poetry,
From out the star-lit skies 't was torn
And handed down when I was born.

In others' works I find no line
Which I could quote and call it mine,
Though if I should on others dote
I 'd mark each line which I would quote.

Though we were born with different names
My blood is flowing in thy veins—
My love for thee, and all the rest,
Lives in thy blood which warms my breast.

WHEN I AM GONE.

When this spirit that warms me has taken
Its flight from my warm loving breast,
Will these stanzas some warm heart awaken
Who will visit the tomb where I rest?

Here let me of one thought remind you,
Ere death bursts this frail mortal band,
Wherever this volume may find you,
There my heart will be held in your hand.

I ask not an ebony casket
Nor a shroud of the costliest cloth,
No, my reason forbids me to ask it—
For 't will only be food for the moth.

Let my grave be in some pleasant wildwood
Where the wild flowers bloom in the spring,
Somewhere near the home of my childhood,
Where the notes of the oriole ring.

AUTUMN MUSINGS.

Autumn leaves are gently falling
From the boughs by breezes bent,
And the God of nature 's calling
Back the spirits that he sent.

The cricket's voice has ceased its ringing,
The robin 's fled to distant climes;
Still my spirit fond is winging
To the measure of my rhymes.

Imagination courts the streamlet
Flowing from the mountain side,
Murmuring from its trickling inlet,
Gurgling onward to the tide.

Ah! I 'm floating on the river,
Where humanity must float;
Soon this heart shall cease to quiver
And this tongue to lisp one note.

Soon I 'll see the clouds appearing
In brief life's cerulean sky,
And 't will prove the end is nearing—
I, like leaves, must fade and die.

THE SERAPH.

It seems I hear a seraph sing
Too sweet for mortal ears to hear,
And seem to hear it fluttering
While sweeping through the atmosphere.

Be still! the voice is at the door,
It is some spirit from above—
No tongue was ever tuned before
To sing such touching strains of love.

With silent touch I ope'd the door
To see what spirit form was there,
And learn its earthly name before
It winged away upon the air.

I ope'd the door; O, God, the sight
That fluttered there before my eyes!
It was my child all robed in white,
Who stole away from Paradise.

I started back, she followed on,
Until we were within the room,
And there she sang an angel song
Which drove away my earthly gloom.

"O, father, pray do not take fright;
I'll be a lamp unto thy soul,
And guide thee through death's darkest night
Unto that grand seraphic goal."

I kissed the spirit of my child—
(O, how sweet the immortal kiss!)
She waved her little hand and smiled,
And hied away to realms of bliss.

THE DISMAL DAY.

As I look through the gloom of the dismal day,
At the leafless woods and the hills of gray,
My thoughts roll back to the days gone by,
And I care not whether I live or die.
For sad are the winds that sob and sigh
As they warble the song of a dismal day,
And the robin chirps on the leafless bush,
And I hear the notes of a starving thrush.
The snow-clouds hide the azure sky
And the flakes of snow come whistling by,
And through the boughs the cold winds rush,
Singing a song of the dismal day.

But soon there will come on the swift-winged breeze
A flame of fever, of foul disease,
And the soul and body will wrestle with pain
Till death his foeman hath utterly slain,
And though the green leaves hang on the trees
It will be a sad and dismal day.

The robins may sing in the willows that wave
Where the funeral goes to the new-made grave,
And the sun shines bright from the skies above
On the hearse that carries our mortal love,
And a spirit will whisper, "I 'm able to save,"
Which will drive away the dismal day.

TO J. B. G.

O, what are proud titles of fame unto one
When he looks on the rays of his last-setting sun,
Though the glitter and glare of his gold-lettered name
Dazzle one's eyes on the statues of fame?

Or why should we weep when we look on our dead?
Loved ones have passed through the portals we dread;
They bade us adieu without any fears,
And left us to moisten their mem'ry with tears.

O slumber, sweet slumber, the sister of death,
Where pleasant dreams come to the mind with a breath,
If this be a foretaste of death when we die,
Release me, release me! O quick, let me fly!

WE ARREST OUR THOUGHTS.

We arrest our thoughts with pen and ink,
And thus imprison what we think;
Yet writing lets the prisoner free,
And thus my thoughts you plainly see.

'T is thus poetic gems are caught
While drifting on the sea of thought,
And woven in a wreath of rhyme
To decorate the shores of time.

Then while we tread time's beaten shore
(Followed by vast millions more)
Let us leave some gems behind
To adorn the human mind.

Soon we must hide from mortal view,
Then the millions who pursue
Will see our tracks along the shore
Where we have passed long years before.

A MONODY.

One Sunday morning in the bright sunny May
I strolled to the tea-berry hills far away,
Where the fern and the hawthorn and sassafras grew
And clusters of tea berries glittered with dew.

There I met a fair damsel, my only true love,
And we heard the low song of the sad moaning dove
As we gathered the violets that peeped from the ground
While the dove changed his notes to a still sadder sound.

Now the days of my wooing are forever gone by,
For a falsehood hath severed that sweet blissful tie,
And I 'm sad and I 'm lonely as I sit here and write
And peep through the lattice out into the night.

My heart seems as young as in days that are past,
But why should the pleasures of life fly so fast?
'T is the errors of courtship, I plainly can see,
Since I am still single at thirty and three.

Once we sat by a pond at the foot of a hill
Where the lilies grew up from the waters so still,
Where the butterflies played o'er the tall waving grass
Which waved on the waters combined in a mass.

O sweet are those mem'ries! O visions of yore!
There I pushed the old row-boat away from the shore
And we sailed on the waters, my love by my side,
While the silvery waves rolled a miniature tide.

The hours I loved so have fled like a dart,
And the older I grow grow more wounds in my heart;
My life seems a shadow, my prospects have fled,
And pallid my cheeks are and gray is my head.

O could I embrace her and claim one sweet kiss
From those red rosy lips—sweet cushions of bliss—
Where the seal of affection I prest on her lips
And relished the dew like the honey-bee sips.

Forever, fair maiden, from me thou wert torn,
Now the wife of another, his home to adorn;
But thy presence will haunt me while in this vain world
Till the sail of my spirit for Heaven 's unfurled.

O strange is the spirit that tempteth me now,
And stranger the weariness laid on my brow;
O man never fathoms his wretched mistake
Till he plighteth his life for a vain woman's sake.

Yet man is but matter and filled with a soul,
And he goes all to shipwreck on a wave-beaten shoal,
His compass once broken, then wrong will he steer,
And a paper that's bottled relates his career.

July 4, 1865.

WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG, FRIEND.

When you and I were young, friend,
(I remember well the time,)
You came to visit at our school
Down by the grove of pine;
Your cheeks were like the roses
Bathed in the morning dew,
But that rosy glow seems fading,
Slowly fading from my view.

How often do I think, friend,
Of the happy days agone—
Of the pleasures of my boyhood,
When you and I were young;
The days have fled so swiftly—
They grew so soon to years—
O, it fills my heart with sorrow
And my eyes with bitter tears.

There is a sacred love, friend,
Which God above designed,
And to us a tongue is given
That we may speak our mind,
But often man 's too timid
To let his heart be known,

And he 'll wander round the wide world
Heart-broken and alone.

That poet never lived, friend,
Who did not write some line
Of the beauty of a woman,
Or her sacred love divine,
But true as I grasp this slender pen
To let the inklings flow,
The suggestion of these lines of mine
The world will never know.

When we have bid adieu, friend,
To this unkind cold world,
When some tender, gentle hands
Have my manuscripts unrolled,
They will find your maiden name, friend,
Portrayed in letters plain—
They will know that you were beautiful
By reference to your name.

If I should die to-night, friend,
If death this heart should rend,
Remember in these feeble lines
My heart will live your friend.
If I compliment your beauty
That your name in verse may live,
Pray do not take offense, friend,
But forgive me, oh, forgive!

THE LITTLE NEWSBOY.

A little boy knocked at my door;
I arose and let him in;
I knew that little boy was poor,
For he was dressed so thin.

His little hands were almost froze,
His lips with cold were blue—
His little cheeks were like the rose,
Aglow with crimson hue.

His little pants were ragged, too,
His boots not fit to wear,
And when he turned about to go
I saw his elbows bare.

His little lips did tremble so
That he could hardly talk,
The tear-drops soon began to flow
And froze there on the walk.

"Won't you buy a paper, sir?"
The little fellow said;
His voice my very soul did stir
As down he hung his head.

"I have bought one, my little friend;
I have no use for two."
"But you will have this one to lend—
I 'll have the money, too."

Away he started on a run,
Was almost out the gate;
I quickly sent my little son,
Who called to him to wait.

I bought a paper of the boy
And handed him his pay,
And planted in his heart a joy
That bloomed there all that day.

O, I can love the little child
In rags, with dirty face;
On such my darling mother smiled,
With me in her embrace.

TREASURES OF HOME.

I looked into the cradle that was rocking by my side
And saw a darling flower—a blossom of my pride;
Two spheres of sparkling beauty were her flashing little eyes,
And a face as fair as Venus twinkling in the azure skies;

An angel smile did linger on her rosy little lips,
As she held a little toy by her little finger tips.
God has given blooming flowers and adorned my home
with art,
But my wife and little children are the dearest to my
heart.

They are the sweetest flowers that God to me hath given,
And when they wither here they will bloom again in
Heaven,
For Jesus made a promise to those who love Him here,
They shall live with Him forever in a grand eternal sphere.

THE POET'S DREAM.

A FANTASY.

'T was on a dark and stormy night
My dreaming soul took skyward flight,
And there beheld thy lovely form
High on the bosom of the storm.
It seemed I trod the air on high
Between the distant earth and sky,
And wondered why I should be there
In clouds to meet a form so fair.
As nearer to thy form I came

I called thee by thy given name
And marveled why in nightly dreams
Our eyes behold such lovely scenes.
I saw thee smile, I heard thy sighs,
I saw the tear-drops in thine eyes—
But why in dreams should I behold
A woman walk on clouds of gold?

LOST LOUIE.

Dear parents, do not weep for me—
I 'm not forever lost;
Though I sleep beneath the hemlock tree
In this lone secluded bosk.

God watches over me to-night,
He drives away my fear,
My lamp is but the pale moonlight,
Yet God is lingering near.

I 've chosen a mossy-cushioned stone
And here I 'll sweetly sleep,
And in my dreams I 'll be at home—
Pray, parents, do not weep.

LILLIAN TO HER BROTHER AND SISTER.

My dear brother Sam,
What a nice little man,
His hair is so white, but not gray;
He 's always content
When he can torment
His two little sisters at play.

This dear little pet,
I ne'er shall forget,
How often he vexes my heart;
His eyes are so bright,
But he 'll work with his might
To tear all my playthings apart.

Now dear sister Rose
I will propose
That we never fight with him again,
For you know mamma said
When our spirits have fled
We shall live with the Lamb that was slain.

This dear little boy,
I know he 's a joy
To his mamma when she is alone,

And if he should die
Oh! how I should cry
For dear little brother when gone.

So let us be good
And make dollie's hood
And dress her as neat as we can,
Then Jesus will love us
Who reigns far above us,
And better we 'll love little Sam.

ENGINE No. 61, RALSTON, MAY 5, 1882.

THE MAIDEN'S WARNING.

Fair maids take warning, now, by this,
And scorn a flattering coxcomb's kiss;
They are the vultures, thou their prey—
They flatter only to betray.

Do not attempt with men to flirt,
Imagine not their hearts to hurt,
Nor trifle with an earnest heart,
For thine may be the one to smart.

Maids to vice are often blind
And when they 're warned they will not mind;
But alas! they cry—when 't is too late—
"My beauty was my victor's bait."

Then boast not of your beauty rare,
Your satins, jewels and feathers fair;
For beauty often is a curse
And leads one on from bad to worse.

When your good name once is gone,
Friends will leave you one by one;
And your count'nance once so fair
Will wear a mantle of despair.

There is a beauty that cannot die,
Though still unseen it lingers nigh;
It is that beauty of the soul
Which leads us on to Heaven's goal.

THE PRISONER'S PRAYER.

O God, within these prison bars,
Denied from light or lunar stars,
I call upon Thy precious name
To help support my weary frame.

My sable locks have now grown few,
Are sprinkled with a silv'ry hue,
And in my sleep by times it seems
They split with fright from dreadful dreams.

Beyond these whitened walls of stone
I hear my fellow prisoners groan;
I hear them pray and pant for breath
Until they 're freed from pain by death.

Why, just God, why was I born
A prison cell thus to adorn,
Where rats and mice come in to scan
The count'nance of a wretched man?

My blood doth curdle in my veins
Each time I move my heavy chains,
But here I 'll die divorced from home,
Anchored unto a column stone.

Here where the weeping eye can trace
The marks of anguish on my face,
Where man is never freed from gloom
Until he 's rescued by the tomb.

Where note of lyre nor song of bird
From year to year is ever heard,
Where God's own air with filth is blue
And all is damp with dungeon dew.

Tell me, O God, wherefore it is
Man should design a hell like this,
And chain poor mortals here to dwell,
And man be monarch of the hell?

LAST DAY OF APRIL.

Low in the west beyond the hill
The sun is sinking fast,
And angry winds are blowing still
With an April chilly blast.

To morrow is the first of May—
Then April will be gone;
Then merry children will laugh and play
And sing the sweet May song.

Those little children—oh! how dear
To loving parents' hearts—
They 're watched with care from year to year,
And taught the guileless arts.

Ah! tender years
Which know no fears,
Ye 're spent like idle dreams;
When mind flows back
O'er time's short track.
Life is not what it seems.

THE LION AND THE CHILD.

A lion, though by nature wild,
The art of man can tame,
So that a harmless little child
May lead it by the mane.

Dear little child, by nature tame,
The lion will obey;
It takes the lion by the mane
And leads the beast away.

LAURA AND CORA KILLING A SNAKE.

"Charmer of the feathery race,
In thine eyes we find no grace,
And we 'll show thee girls can, too,
Do what stronger heroes do."

They gathered straightway sticks and stones
And crunched the serpent's wriggling bones.
"There, now, quickly let us leave,
For we 've done more than Mother Eve."

REFLECTIONS.

I remember the days when I was so wee
That I scarcely could climb on my dear father's knee
To let him impress a kiss on my brow,
As I often do to my little boy now.

THE STORM CEASES.

While thunders roll from hill to hill
God speaks and bids the storm be still;
He breaks the chain-like lightning glare
And bids the sun shine everywhere.

SCORN THE RUM SHOP.

The juice of old decaying grain
Distilled intoxicates the brain
And sows the soul with evil seeds,
Which grow a crop of hellish deeds.

The crimson wine within the cup
When drank will wake the devil up,
That he may take his usual stroll
And capture some poor drunkard's soul.

Give ear, companions, hear my cry,
Ere I a cursed drunkard die!
Extend to me a helping hand—
I 'm drunk—so weak I cannot stand.

Behold my clothes, my naked breast
Where once a fond wife's head did rest,
But since she 's gone from my embrace
I tread the downward path—disgrace.

The dread of hell now o'er me steals,
Ten thousand devils at my heels,
My brain aflame like burning oil,
And fiery serpents round me coil.

The wanton witch, with siren song,
Decoyed me as I passed along,
And lured me to her curtained inn
To drink the scalding wines of sin.

I 've heard the roaring storms of hell
Where Satan and his angels dwell,
Where fiery fagots kindle pain
And paralyze the spirit brain.

I 've felt the bite of crystal frost,
From earth to heaven and hell been tossed—
No more I 'll touch the glaring glass,
But "scorn the rum shop" as I pass.

DRUNK.

It is a dreadful sight to see
A woman on a drunken spree,
With fiery eyes and fiendish frown,
As roamed the streets of Langdon town.
Around the cobbler's ranch she ran
Cursing, damning every man—
With shameful strength and lack of sense
She leveled a panel of picket fence,
Hurled the fence posts into the pool,
Yelled and danced like a raving fool,
Chased the little boys and girls
Till one at her a picket hurls.
Then she sang and tried to dance,
Staggered back to the cobbler's ranch,
Where within a room like a filthy sty
Lay the cobbler filled with rot-gut rye.

HOPE.

Old Hope is a bewitching liar
  Who travels all over the earth,
He will flatter a foolish desire
  And smile at an idiot's birth.

He will flatter the heart of the weeping
Whose zealous prayers reach to the sky,
But when loved ones in cold death are sleeping
We may know that he told us a lie.

CHILLY MAY, 1882.

If birds and bees and ants be wise
They 'll seek some other paradise
Many miles from here,
Where May is not so drear;
Where the warm sun shines on wheat fields green,
And blooming flowers can be seen;
Where there is a gentle breeze
And the leaves hang green on all the trees.
There it would seem like May
Much more than it does to-day.

THE DROWNED DRUNKARD.

The drunkard tumbled in the silvery stream—
Lacked strength to make the shore—
Life and death he seemed to float between,
Then sank to rise no more.

With clenched fists tight as death could bind,
He grasped for life's last tender thread;
But his spirit going left not a wave behind,
And the drunkard lay at the bottom dead.

THE GAMBLER'S FATE.

Ill gotten gain will not remain
Long with him who gets it,
For every time he 'll lose a dime,
Just so sure 's he bets it.

The gambler's life is one of strife,
Though he makes a good beginning;
Luck will turn and his heart will burn
When some one else is winning.

He 'll tell you, too, that life is blue,
For down the road he 's going—
Down to hell where the smell
Of burning brimstone 's flowing.

A DREAM OF THE DEVIL.

As I walked through a dark lonely bower
At midnight, when all was so still,
I saw not the bloom of a flower
Nor heard the sweet sound of a rill.

'T was the land of the true living Devil,
A deplorable, black looking spot;
And the place that seemed blackest and level,
There Satan had built his dark cot.

What a queer looking, grinning old creature
I saw at the door of that den;
His face wore a black human feature
And he toyed with the skulls of dead men.

The red-hot saliva was streaming
From off the black demon's red tongue,
And his eyeballs with terror were gleaming,
As a star in the heart of the sun.

LINES TO A SKELETON.

Grim skeleton! monster of the grave!
Thou art harmless, powerless;
No more to earth a slave,
Thy whitened bones are but a mess
That's left of mortality,
A human frame of lime,
A mark of past reality.

TO THE SUN.

Eternal Sun whose silvery light
Comes beaming from above,
Who drives away the silent night
And whispers words of love,

Who drinks the vapor from the stream
And sips the morning dew,
Who dances on the myrtle green
And life imparts anew,
We welcome thee at early dawn
When birdlings sing their praise
Along the smiling leafy lawn,
A thousand happy lays.

TO A WOMAN A HUNDRED YEARS OLD.

O why should the heart of a woman grow cold,
Or imagine her lot is so bad,
When there 's love in a heart a hundred years old
And the countenance seldom looks sad?

THE BROKEN VOW.

TO P.

"I 'll drop him gently from my mind,"
Cried the tall dark-eyed brunette,
"I 'll teach him what is womankind,
A lesson he will ne'er forget.
I 'll teach him, too, that ties are broken,
Though in earnest he may be,
And this shall be to him a token
That he is nothing more to me."

AUTOGRAPHS.

TO LAURA.

I 've placed these inklings in your book
For your fair eyes to see,
And when for others' gems you look
Perhaps you 'll think of me.

TO MARTHA.

When out of your sight
You 'll forget that I live,
Or perhaps you will wish I am dead;
But the lines that I write I hope you 'll forgive
Should the words prove untrue that I 've said.

TO MINNIE.

I cannot refuse thy ardent request
When thoughts of my childhood still lurk in my breast;
Ah! ruined, incompleted time!
How wasted were the hours of my youth,
E'en years when life was in its purest prime.

TO JENNIE.

There is not a false heart
That has learned to deceive
But what it will bleed by a wound—
By the wound it will smart
And soon will believe
The coil of deception 's unwound.

TO MINNIE.

I pity those who will not hear
The counsel of a friend,
When falls the bitter scalding tear—
When courtship 's at an end.
Ah, fragments of the shattered heart!
When sweetest hopes have fled—
When two must say farewell and part,
'T were better both were dead.

FRAGMENTS.

How can this pen of mine portray
My wasted years gone by?
An autumn leaf may fall to-day—
To-morrow so may I.

I find a proof in time that 's fled
To-morrow 's not our own—
We live to-day—to-morrow dead,
We fly to realms unknown.

Our joys are like the winds that blow
To some wave-beaten shore;
A moment here, away they go—
We feel them nevermore.

TO A LITTLE BOY'S PHOTOGRAPH.

He stands beside the marble stand,
While on it rests his childish hand;
With rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes,
He knows no land but Paradise.

See on his lips the approaching smile—
Those lips that bear no taint of guile,
How well his form is pictured there,
That little boy with curly hair.

If man to man would lend that love
  Which Deity designed,
How happy would the whole world move—
  No enemies we 'd find.

Seek not to sever the golden chain
  Which binds two hearts together,
But let that love supremely reign
  All through life's changing weather.

Give me pure love without a cent,
'T is better than wealth with discontent.
The former wins the immortal prize,
The latter true love seldom buys.

PRIDE.

Proud mortal, canst thou sift the air
And find departed spirits there
Whom thou mayest question as to thine own destiny?
Why Deity hath designed thy birth, life, and death a mystery?
Nay, an eternal strait doth lie between eternity and thee,
But Death, that dreadful messenger, soon will solve the mystery.

FAITH.

He who builds upon an immortal base
May up the golden ladder rise,
And futher on (by unfaltering pace)
View the streets of Paradise.

TO B.

Shall the spirit of mortal take wings like a dove
And soar to bright regions of bliss?
Ah! a soul that is fettered by God's holy love
The portals of Heaven can't miss.

And the sight of the eye that mortality's given,
That must fade from the beauties of earth,
Will brighten anew in the kingdom of Heaven
When ope'd by an immortal birth.

LINES ON PRESENTING AN AUTOGRAPH ALBUM TO A NIECE ON HER SEVENTEENTH BIRTHDAY.

This book I now give you is of but little worth,
But it is to remember the day of your birth,
And if you should live to see twice seventeen
The thirty-four years will have been but a dream.

Of years I have seen now full thirty-four,
But I do not expect to see that many more,
For the monster, grim Death, will be sneaking around
To take me and hide me low in the ground.

Then may these lines that I 've writ ne'er grow old,
Though the heart in my bosom be silent and cold,
But let them grow brighter as others' have shined,
And remember the author by the name that is signed.

TIME.

Time is not young, nor is it old,
Though by Time all things are told;
Time is not old, nor is it young,
Nor without Time can songs be sung.

The rule is good that works both ways,
But Time shortens not by adding days;
There is a time though but a span,
And 't is measured by the life of man.

LITERATURE VS. ART.

As long as rivers roll and electric gear
Convolves with thundering atmosphere,
The human heart will seek some figurative goal
By which it may pour out the beauties of the soul;
But artists, with all their colors and their skill,
Will fail to paint the paths of mind, the strength of human will.

EPIGRAMS.

With fiery steed and silvered chaise
Man rides on to crime,
But soon he 's blinded by disgrace
And minus his last dime.

Though people dress in finest silk
And live on mush and buttermilk,
It neither mars their piety
Nor bars them from society.

Those who would to fortune rise
And make this world a paradise,
Must closely button up their lip
And let no business secret slip.

The Devil writes, with different inks,
All the devilishness he thinks,
On the hearts of those who will
Let him sling his cursed quill.

A fool may write, in verse or prose,
All the foolishness he knows,
And thus his weakness advertise
For men of sense to criticise.

Within the slippery slimy shell
Slept the silly snail,
While through the tough and tangled turf
The turtle tugged his tail.

Kind words are the polish by which our affections are brightened, but deceitful words are the tar of turmoil, to which the dust of adversity clings.

Could I command that precious jewel,
A master education,
'T would be my literary fuel
And help in tribulation.
I 'm grieved when thinking o'er the past,
The days I went to school—
Those halcyon days that could not last,
'Till I secured my jewel.

THE DOOM AND DOWNFALL OF THE BOLD EMPIRIC AND THE JEERING JADE.

Though ye have lived a hidden life
Your every joy is crowned with strife,
Your pangs at heart they linger still,
You have made your child a sacrifice,
And planned for her the paths of vice,
By your own stubborn will.

O mine enemy! were there hair enough
Upon thy beastly pate I could pluck it
For a brush and paint thy profile
With thy blood in some conspicuous place,
Or I could stretch thy heart-strings on my viol,
And with rosined bow of thy dried sinews
Grate thundering tones of agony.
But my reason forbids; they are too rotten
With crime; unborn posterity demands
Of me a better deed, and reason bred
Within my breast forbids my neck to fill
A hangman's noose.

By the insidious workings of an evil heart
Ye have anchored yourselves to the infernal bars
Of a doubting conscience, and pillowed your hopes
On dissolving vanity. O, could ye retrace

The path that ye have trod and pluck therefrom
Those fiery darts of agony, what happiness
'T would count; or could ye annihilate the thought
'T would give relief to your corrupted breasts
And yet a crumbling hope for Heaven might linger on
the verge.

How oft your brains did quake and flesh did creep
At phantom faces glittering in the dark;
How oft ye have watched the fatal drug within
The glaring glass, when dread of execration
Forbade your trembling hand to grasp the cup
And swallow down the dose.

With tremulous tongue and quivering lips
Ye have lisped a thousand lies; your once good name
Is dipped in dye indelible
And blacker than the sombre crow.

Ye human fiends, of blackest night and darkest deeds!
Ye who have dishonored the humble home of the aged man,
Brought disgrace to his whitened locks, designed the doom
And downfall of his posterity,
And scorned him for his kindness, go!
Seek some solitary doleful dungeon,
Iron bound and gravel floored, and there
Live out your allotted time in darkest, dreary cell,
Where your gray hairs may split from end to end
With fright from dreadful dreams, where

Somnambulism may seize your weary frame
And trot you to and fro from icy couch
To frozen walls, where nevermore your eyes
Shall see a glittering star and the eternal sun
Shall never lend a ray of light;
Where your food may be of frozen bread, your drink
Of breath-thawed dungeon frost;
Where the ghostly skeleton of him you 've wronged
May chase you from your couch,
And with rattling bones and death-like strength
Hurl you round from wall to wall
Like chain shot from the cannon's mouth,
Until a frightening chill solidifies each drop
Of blood that flows within your veins, then stand
You erect in your cell like a statue of ice
And thaw you back to life by hurling at you
Fire-brands from his fleshless, ghastly, accursing hands.

O thy vain deception, lulled with siren song,
With holy writ in feeble hands so fair,
You have held on to the reins of vice too long, alas!
You 're overwhelmed in dark despair. Your schemes
Were planned too plain to hold, and hence your joys
(Illegal as they were) are now unraveled
From deception's glittering coil
And cankered in your breasts.
Your vocal strains are hushed at last
Like the dying oriole's in some lone secluded bosk,

And your crime-depicted countenance is scorned
By those who loved you well.

By divine authority your infanticide
Was checked, and evidence revealed by you alone
Seals the accusation truth. Frail,
Fretting, sin-born babe, unhappy recipient
Of neglected care, what infelicities
Art thou born to share nestled to a paternal breast
That owes but animosity to God.

Alas! dread calamity has o'ertaken you,
Satanic schemes are frustrated, and your sweet
Anticipations disappointed. Ye
Can no more triumph with your treacherous schemes,
But in a state of trepidation nightly walk
Your beat of midnight gloom. Just retribution
Bolts the door of flattery and
The jeering jade is swallowed up by
Charms of bold empiricism.
O what rotten bliss! how blasted in its bloom!
Will not dark futurity throw a veil
Of tears over your shattered schemes? Shall bleak
Eternity 'gender smiles for ended joy
And boundless grief? Will ye scorn the truth of this,
Your portrait painted true, this picture of
Your nature and experience? Grasp
The telescope of time, bring it to your eyes,
And in a retrospective view you will discern

The broken beam that caused the frame of hope to fall.
Is not your reason ripe, or is your comprehension blind?
O, what queenly pride! what sweet angelic smiles,
When harlots hold their heads so high that hell
Doth heave a sigh! O, wandering woman,
Boasting of thy beauty rare, an agent
Who procures a curse though bought at virtue's cost!
What thundering thoughts of threatening truth to soften
Hardened hearts—hearts solidified
By sin, that a gospel drill cannot affect
The glaze, though the blood of Christ is lubricant
And Jehovah's power applied!

But what 's affection for a friend
Who will sway a rapier sharp to sever kindred ties,
Where viduity 's destroyed and childish virtue sacrificed
To feed a human fiend, where brass-hearted brutes
In human shape train a little child to sin?
'T was confidence imbedded in your hearts
That dimmed affection's eye and drew
The blinding curtain 'twixt loving hearts and vilest shame.

Dear, departed parent, doth not thy spirit
Linger on the breeze, on some weary-worn wind
That floateth by the door where dwells thine only child?
O, God! 't is a blest ordinance if death doth eclipse
A spirit's view from worldly vanities.
When life is oozing out and reason
No more wrestles with your soul,

Who 'll linger near your bed to snatch one life-like kiss,
The last that's cooling with your dying body?
Ah! like the feathery thistle-blow driven
By the autumn breeze, your spirit,
Which long has warmed your frail temple of clay,
Will take its flight to eternal realms unknown
And your once fair, fascinating form shall court
The crumbling clods low in the silent tomb.

THE HARBINGERS OF SPRING.

O, it is a glorious thing
To see the harbingers of spring!
Cats are fighting on the porch,
Their eye-balls gleaming like a torch.

The dog is on his morning beat
Hunting for a bone to eat,
Lizards groveling in the dust
And crows and blue-jays on a bust.

Snakes and toads will soon be here
To fright and mock the brindle steer,
Then of course we may expect
To see him run with tail erect.

Butterflies are on the breeze,
Chipmonks climbing apple trees,
Owls asleep with open eyes
And bull-bats catching bottle flies.

Millers buzzing 'round the lamp,
Caterpillars on the tramp,
Skunks and foxes are about
To clear the farmers' hen-roosts out.

Circuses will be here soon
With calliopes all out of tune,
Men and women dressed in tights—
Half a dollar to see the sights.

Soon we will hear that music sweet
By the organ grinder on the street,
While the monkey stands on his head and winks
To the time of the tune called "Captain Jinks."

IRA HAMILTON'S SERENADE.

The bells were stolen from the steers
And jingled in poor Ira's ears;
Then he sought a place to hide
And ran away and left his bride.

"Come back, thou knave!" the boys did shout,
"And dish that beer and whiskey out,
Or we will tear the shanty down
And strip thee of thy wedding gown."

FRAGMENT.

Man makes his meanness manifest
By the filth he slings,
But sometimes hits a hornet's nest,
And gets a thousand stings.

He then attempts to make amends
For what he 's been about,
And wishes for a thousand friends
To draw the stingers out.

DEATH OF THREE DOGS.

Two dogs were on the railroad track,
My engine gave each one a whack,
And now they sleep within their graves
With monuments of barrel staves.

The next day another cur
(Not far from where the first two were)
Was walking by the railroad side,
But changed his course—he howled and died.

Canines are like some people are,
They 're venturesome, but go too far;
They 're always poking their long nose
Where the wise man never goes.

FASHIONS.

Had woman been born with a bustle behind
No worse looking creature on earth could we find,
We had rather believe that the monkey or ape
Had something to do in forming her shape.

The cows and the camels have no desire
To build up their hips and their humps any higher,
They go not to dances nor parade on the street
To exhibit their bustles and corn-crippled feet.

The birds of the forests and fish of the brook,
How handsome in Nature's own fashion they look!
But woman will pluck from a pretty bird's breast
The fairest of feathers to feather her nest.

At noontide of day you will see on the street
The slender-legged dude with his mighty big feet,
His pants are in fashion and fit you will see
As tight as the bark on a mulberry tree.

Away with such fashions! God did not intend
His work on His image frail mortals should mend;
He cut the first garment for Adam and Eve
And for a new pattern they never did grieve.

THE KISS.

To ——, who after drinking was requested by the author to hand the glass to him.

Please pardon, sweet lady, but hand me the glass,
That a chance for a kiss from thy lips may not pass;
When thy red rosy lips were pressed to the rim
The nectar of kisses around it did swim.
Now since from thy hand I have taken the cup
And from the same circle have taken a sup,
I have tasted that sweetness that 's hid in a kiss
And moistened my lips in the liquid of bliss.

TO A FRIEND.

TO J. W. S.

There are songs in thy soul that have never been sung,
Nor uttered by ancient poetical tongue;
There are thoughts that are sweet as the honey and dew
That moistened the mornings my infancy knew.

When thy locks become whitened and furrowed thy brow
May thy heart be still throbbing with music as now,
May thy pen that has rusted and crumbled to dust
Leave language to prove that thy spirit is just.

Fond nature, who painted the pansy so sweet,
Has painted the cheeks of the children we meet

And borrowed the stars from the far-distant skies
To ornate the blue of a sweet baby's eyes.

But thine eyes that are beaming with beauty and love
Must fade as a rose in an oasis' grove,
And the beauty of meadows and mountains so green
By their life-beaming beauty no more shall be seen.

Accept my frail stanzas—they 're of little worth—
And hand them on down to posterity's birth,
Who will see that the pansy, the pink and the rose
Bloom on the fair spot where thy form shall repose.

THE MAID OF MILBOURN GROVE.

Art thou the maid of Milbourn Grove
Who 's never known sacred love?
If so, explain the reason why
Sacred love can never die?
The maid of Milbourn answered me,
"Time will tell thee—thou shalt see."

Maid of Milbourn, canst thou tell
Where my heart and soul do dwell?
Why the sight of one so fair
Forms a fascinating snare?
The maid of Milbourn answered me,
"Time will tell thee—thou shalt see."

Pretty maiden of the grove,
Why my pleadings disapprove?
Canst thou tell the cause of love,
Is it transmitted from above?
The maid of Milbourn answered me,
"Time will tell thee—thou shalt see."

Maid of Milbourn, wilt thou come
And enjoy my rural home?
Wilt thou be my loving wife
And soothe the sorrows of my life?
The maid of Milbourn answered then,
"I've no confidence in men."

Pretty maiden, queen of bliss,
May I enjoy one parting kiss?
If not, I'll grasp thy fair white hand,
Bid thee adieu and leave this land.
The maiden answered with a smile,
"Thou wilt not leave me yet awhile."

Pretty maiden of the grove,
Canst thou not return my love?
I have given no offence—
Keep me not in such suspense!
The maid of Milbourn answered me,
"I will give my heart to thee.

"I knew that love that never dies
The moment I beheld thine eyes;

I knew that I would be thy bride,
And in thy home with thee abide;
I know that pure undying love
Is transmitted from above."

O, holy be the sacred tie
Which binds the love that cannot die!
Although the grave may claim one part,
They both shall live within one heart.
And when that heart of love shall die
They both shall live beyond the sky.

ON THE BANK OF DEAD RIVER.

Alone on the bank of Dead River
I wandered one night in a dream,
And the sight made my very heart quiver
Which I saw in the depths of that stream.

The river was blue with corruption,
Yet the eye could look into it deep,
For the wind caused it no interruption—
It lay like a lake when asleep.

And there lay beneath the blue waters
Two bodies not twenty years old,
A cursed old misers two daughters
Who were murdered for silver and gold.

The hand of their father had killed them
And hid them away there at night
To recover the treasure he willed them
And cover his crime from the light.

But the God that created those daughters
Brought unto my brain this droll dream,
Which led me off down to the waters
To discover this murderous scheme.

Ah! the murmur of murder will speak out,
Though it be in a far distant clime,
And a clue to the party will leak out
And the criminal die for his crime.

THE INFERNAL MACHINE.

There came to our town a financial crash
And the voters did wonder what became of their cash;
But alas! in the rule of the township was seen
The wheels of a wondrous infernal machine.

The voters worked hard a dollar to get
To wipe out the charge on the tax duplicate;
But when out they had wiped it and polished it clean
They only had greased the infernal machine.

Now business was booming brisk for the ring rule,
And alas! they thought to bridle a mule;

But a mule, we all know, by nature is mean,
And with a kick he reversed the infernal machine.

That was unpleasant, of course, for the ring
Who fired, and run, and ruled the machine—
It didn't seem possible, and yet it did seem
That a mule could upset an infernal machine.

Turn out now, ye voters; don't be so shy!
But come to the polls with blood in your eye,
And there may you say with a conscience serene,
"I have voted to burst the infernal machine."

If you 'd rather not vote, stay at home in your ease;
But surely somebody must furnish the grease—
Your purse may be fat, or ever so lean,
But your dollars will grease the infernal machine.

It is strange how men will set up defense,
Especially when there 's a "pig in the fence;"
They 'll lie and swear to it, do anything mean
In order to save an infernal machine.

A THOUGHT.

Though we 're the parents of the future,
And the offsprings of the past,
We must obey the laws of nature
And return to dust at last.

THE DYING TYRANT.

What joys were in my country's heart
When to this world I came!
But now a tyrant I depart,
The world doth curse my name.

Those who kissed me when a child,
And soothed my infant brow,
Could they have lived they would have smiled
To see me dying now.

Thus in my bitter pangs I'll weep
Till death doth strike the blow
And lull me to eternal sleep
Or plunge me into woe.

Alas! the day has come, and here am I
To view the wonderous strait o'er which I am
About "to pass unto that bourne from whence
No traveler returns."

A monarch I
Have lived, but a tyrant I must die,
And consign this frail tenement of clay
To be the dwelling place of worms.

I've violated the law of God
And bribed the law of man, rejoiced to view
The blood-stained plain where human gore ran hot,
Silenced the lamenting widow's moans and starved

The little infant that nestled to the breast:
Into doleful dungeons in iron chains have cast my fellow-
man
And triumphed o'er the treachery of my successful
schemes.

But what terrible tales now unfold
Within the pages of my life's dread diary!
Life's darkened track retrospectively surveyed
Presents a view as if some devouring flame
Had swept ignominiously o'er a green forest
And left a barren waste thickly strewn
With the skeletons of worms.

O, cover me with thicker robes,
For I'm freezing to my couch! My blood
Seems thickening in my veins, chilled
By the breath of eternal winter.

O, what are the proud titles of fame unto one
When the light of the eyes that mortality's given
Grow dim and sightless—when all the beauties
Of outward loveliness are shut out
By the inward curtain of death? Death? No!
"There is no death; what seems so is transition,"
The departing of the spirit from this warped,
Convolved body, to be tossed about
By shivering winds, to find some fairer place
Of bliss, or to be thrust through some
Eternal dungeon's door, where red-hot flames

Hungry for their meals, leap from wall to wall,
Ever dining on the damned.

But how am I to-day? E'en worse than yesterday.
I 've swallowed down the bitter dose that glittered
In the glass, and yet I 'm stretched
Full length upon my couch,
My every nerve 's unstrung, my hopes have fled,
My countenance is changed, my tongue 's expanding
Betwixt my jaws and I am tottering
On the verge of dark futurity.

O, hath not nature yet some hidden herb
From whence ye can extract a cure? Nay! I fear
Fond nature 's done her best for me
All through my life of luxury,
And now she 's come to do her worst. Her worst?
Great God! am I delirious? Is there yet
Something that 's worse than death, some undiscovered
curse
(Unseen by mortal eyes) supported by
The eternal chains of Heaven, some infernal region
Inhabited by ten thousand fiery fiends
With salivous gleaming tongues to lick
The immortal souls of those who sail to thrones
On seas of blood? Or must my spirit be tossed
About by tempests in their glee, or hurled
By the breath of tireless storms into the heart
Of some vast wilderness, into some secluded cave
Where ravenous beasts, with glaring eyes, will rout

Me out at midnight and at morn, and where
My ghostly eyes may snap with fright from dreadful
groans,
Where in the dead of midnight gloom the cunning fox
And moping owl will mock my mournful prayer?

"O, the dark days of vanity! while here
How tasteless! how terrible when gone!
Gone? They never go! when past,
They haunt us still, the spirit walks
On every day diseased."

Have I slept and dreamed this dreadful truth?
No! 'Tis bold reality! this life
Is but a dream from which man only wakes
At the approach of death.

O, how long shall this space of intervening darkness
Hold my feeble eyes at bay?

Sometimes I nap, and in
That momentary snooze a tranquil gleam
Comes o'er my convulsed brain, and
Nature's "sweet restorer"
Throws her perfumed veil o'er my withered hopes,
And in that most insidious dream I review
My halcyon days; but the awakening moment
Reveals the bitter truth, and life's enchanting stream
Seems vanishing from sight.

O, could I have lived the life
Of some humble cottager, or that of

Some lone Indian
Whose rough-constructed couch could ease me
While passing o'er the summit of life,
Ease me down into a valley of pleasant dreams,
What a happy transit mine.

Alas! my tongue can no more lisp a prayer!
My lips are parched, my fame is won, my sceptre rusted,
My throne has rotted from under me and I
Am dangling in the midst of mysteries.
The day is darkening and I plunge
Into the gulf of bleak oblivion.

WHAT IS LIFE?

What is life? an immaterial warmth?
An electric spark which death shall cool
And leave this ruined battery
Dreamless, dank and dead
And subject to decay?
Was I an animalcule,
Tiny as a single mote drifting on the billows
Of the balmy breeze,
Which for five thousand years or more
Have lived and leaped within the darkened walls
Of my ancestors' veins?
If so, then I have lived
Since Adam's first embryo quickened into life.
And now since I have blossomed

Into life I must surely die and be no more.
But if from drink and food
Of my ancestors I have been absorbed,
And thus conceived from fields and flowing streams,
Then I am an element eternal, and can never die.

A PRAYER—ACROSTIC.

Jesus, lover of my soul,
And redeemer of the world,
Make me to know Thy precepts,
Ever guard and protect me from
Sin.

When trials and tribulations
Have compassed me about and my
Eyes have become dim,
Enrich them with new vision that I may be
Led by Thy spirit to that
Eternal sphere where Thou sittest at the
Right hand of God.

Hearken unto the voice of my supplication.
Ever teach my family by Thy spirit to
Yearn for things of Heaven.
Lead them to that
Mansion not made with hands,
Undestructible in the heavens, and let my
Name be written in the book of life as I have
written it in this my prayer. Amen.

TO G. S. L.

Accompanied by a bouquet of sweet arbutus from the author.

The trailing arbutus are now in full bloom,
And I give you a chance to inhale their perfume;
To inhale their sweet fragrance as long as you will
From the bouquet I gathered on rocky Marsh Hill.

Put them in water and they will keep well—
Go now and then to them and take a sweet smell,
And when they have withered and dropped from the stems
Think of the author who sent you the gems.

THE PALE-GREEN CRICKET.

[Sunday evening, July 17th, while my family were at church, I sat alone on the front porch at home, when my ear caught the notes of the first fall cricket which I had heard of the season. I walked out among the grapevines, when the cricket ceased its singing. For a moment it seemed I could see my child and see her smiling "as she vanished from my view." I went to my desk and, in the dark, sat down and wrote the following lines.]

Happy insect, cease thy singing,
On the vine where thou art clinging;
Thy notes to me are bringing
Thoughts of weeping long ago;

Let thy weary wings cease flitting—
Leave the limb where thou art sitting,
My heart with grief is splitting
From thy accents soft and low.

As my thoughts are backward turning
They review a solemn yearning,
When my soul within was burning
With a hope that perished there;
A hope that I saw blended
And my earthly joys all ended—
Nevermore can they be mended
And I lifted from despair.

Silently I sought the thicket
Where sat perched the pale-green cricket—
With a pin I thought to prick it,
Thought to pin it to the vine;
But the moment I came near it
I beheld an angel spirit
And I knew it—did not fear it—
'T was my little angel, mine.

'T was my long-lost little Allie
Who is sleeping in the valley
Where the swallows dart and dally
O'er the graveyard by the pine;
'T was her music that came ringing
Through the cricket that was singing,
Through the cricket that was clinging
To the tender twining vine.

While half conscious I stood thinking
I beheld her spirit sinking,
Saw her smiles, and blue eyes winking
As she vanished from my view,
And to-night she 's standing picket
At the gate, the golden wicket,
While the plaintive pale-green cricket
Her seraphic songs construe.

VENUS AND THE BATTLE.

[The following lines were written at Camp Stoneman Hospital on the morning of November 27th, 1863, while listening to the cannonading of the battle of Locust Grove. "The last stars were fading from sight—the rising light of day chasing them away."—*See Lloyd's History.*]

Eternal planet, silvery star,
Twinkling, blazing in the skies,
Watching men engaged in war—
Their kindred wiping weeping eyes.

See the kneeling wives and widows
On yon distant northern plain!
See their loved ones in the meadows
Bleeding, dying, freed from pain.

Twinkle on, free from this dire,
Let thy light grow brighter still!

Watch us in the conflict's fire
'Till every foeman's blood we spill.

See the horsemen on them dashing!
Hear the roar of shot and shell!
See the glaring bayonets flashing!
Every volley tolls a knell!

Forward, onward, on to victory!
"Rush to glory or the grave,"
May thy country's battle history
Name this a victory for the brave.

When the woes of wars are over
And we meet our friends once more,
Watch each true, heroic lover
Greet his loved one at the door.

Husbands, fathers, sisters, brothers,
When these simple lines you see,
Remember I, like many others,
Suffered, too, for liberty.

TO D.

A doctor may boast of his skill if he will,
Or a cure he has wrought with a mercury pill;
But a man who will show every doctor the door
Will never have use for his medicine more.

TO THE BIRDIE IN THE TREE.

Dear little birdie in the tree!
Were I like thee,
I'd happy be;
All joy on earth—
No second birth;
No dark futurity to dread,
No resurrection from the dead.

Could I creep in
Thy feathery skin,
No promised joys I'd ask;
But I, poor mortal, born in sin,
Am burdened with a task.

Could I but die like birdie dear,
I'd be content to live—
No joys to lose, no dread, no fear—
To God no soul to give.

But hopes and fears, oh how ye're blended!
'Twixt me and the eternal brink,
Where all the joy of this life's ended;
Where I in dreadful dreams may think.

Now little birdie in thy glee,
Just pipe one more sweet song for me,

And thy sweetest notes impart
To lull the sorrow of my heart.

Perhaps 't will cause my heart to ope
To give some god-like spirit scope,
Ere the tenant of this clay
Shall take wings and soar away.

But we (unlike the little birds)
Are taught to sing with gospel words;
Yet, after all our joy and glee,
We groan, and dread eternity.

TO R.

If I intend a heart to hurt
I'll not apologize,
Nor will I tolerate a flirt
To blind my two gray eyes.

I do not wish to twang my bow
To cast at you a dart,
For if I did, too well I know,
I'd wound you to the heart.

I pity one who loves to boast
Of beauty made with paint,
Who imitates the devil most,
Yet would be called a saint.

MAN.

A man may be branded with many a fault.
They will all be erased when he sleeps in his vault—
They will fade from our view as a ship in the sea,
And his name will be honored whatever he be.

WOMAN.

But woman, sweet woman! how sad is her lot,
If she wanders from virtue and once gets a blot,
They will shun her, and scorn her, defame her dear name,
Till she dies broken-hearted, a victim of shame.

IN MEMORIAM.

CHARLES HERMAN STRATTON, DIED AUGUST 11th, 1887, AGED ONE YEAR AND TWENTY-EIGHT DAYS.

While in sorrow we sat by our babe in his illness,
Anxiously waiting the dawn of the day,
The angels slipped in, in a moment of stillness,
And snatched the sweet spirit of Hermie away.

The white-winged angels have crossed the bright ocean
And borne him away to the glittering goal,
Where sorrow nor mortal painful emotion
Can ever disturb the sweet peace of his soul.

SAYINGS.

Man seldom dies; he kills himself.

A live engine is better than a dead engineer.

There is a beauty of the soul which far outshines the works of art.

Nature will have her way, without argument, though she slay men, women and children.

It is safer to sleep in a cemetery, with a tomb for thy pillow, than to lodge in a hotel in a great city.

This earth is like a lousy calf, the inhabitants are destroying the body which feeds them.

He that is my friend is my brother, but he that is my enemy is a distant relative with whom I cannot agree.

A locomotive is the handiwork of man, man is the handiwork of God; both are a living machine and their breath is a vapor.

"There are three things which are too wonderful for me, yea four which I know not"—the glare of the eye of a maid aflame with the fire of fury, the velvety gloss of a butterfly's wings, the spider spinning his silvery web, and the smile of a babe in a dream.

A graveyard would be as dreadful by any other name and the peace of the inhabitants not disturbed.

The sun rose upon no sadder sight than the weeping friends following a corpse who is the victim of a quack doctor.

He who is ambitious to be wise in vice has no right to moan, or he who has labored hard that virtue be destroyed, sinks to a level with the reptile of the dust.

Gold was not mined for one generation, though the miner honestly obtained it from the flinty rock; yet in after years innocent blood shall be spilled for it.

I had rather lived a bachelor and die a wandering beggar than to witness the flowers of my family cut down in infant bloom.

It were better not to have been born than to take cowardly action in the battles of life.

A new-born lie will flourish, grow fat and die; but truth will struggle, starve, be crushed and yet live forever.

Tears wash away the sorrow of the heart, cleanse the windows of the soul and quench an angel's thirst.

An angel before the throne of God is no happier than a little child among a thousand flowers.

FRAGMENTS.

He who 'll design a secret plan
To cheat his fellow laboring man
Will steal the pennies from the dead,
Or from a pauper pilfer bread.

How oft hath poet's pen portrayed
The beauties of a charming maid;
The interwoven locks of hair
Dangling o'er a neck so fair;
The crimson lips, the sparkling eyes,
A heart that heaves a thousand sighs!
Alas! for poet and for maid,
His art, her charms, some day must fade.

To be a shining star in the firmament of fame,
We should never be at war with our fellow man's good name.

There was Charles J. Guiteau
Who thought to cheat the law,
By his counsel representing him insane,
But his hope became a speck,
For the rope soon broke his neck,
And the devil quickly bound him with a chain.

TO E. H. B.

KIND FRIEND:

In thee I seem to find a friend
Whose heart can sympathize
With one whose soul can comprehend
A dream of paradise.

Ah! time destroyed those days gone by—
Those happy hours of youth—
I catch my breath—I heave a sigh,
And realize the truth.

I'm poor in basket and in store,
My locks are growing gray—
I'm drifting on from shore to shore,
Though gloomy is my way.

My boat seems sinking, too, by times,
My oars almost broke;
I'll row for happier, brighter climes,
I'll strike with stronger stroke.

And when beyond this flood of tears
I set my feet on land,
I'll cast an eye on by-gone years,
The place where now I stand.

Kind friend, accept these feeble lines,
They 're of but little worth;
But if in them a merit shines
'T was given at my birth.

TO-NIGHT.

To night the clock tolls twelve; the frost is gathering on the brittle panes and paints a silvery foliage there. The golden midnight moon, in silent muse, looks down upon the virgin snow, and crystal frosts are glittering in the still cold air. To-night the ball-room belle breathes in her death of cold, a sailor drowns, a sinner, too, repents, an angel calls, a baby dies and an aged sire dies. To-night the marriage bells ring out, a mother dies, a babe is murdered, a child is starving, a maid is wooed, and a shivering beggar is rambling round the city streets. To-night the sacrilegious laugh and roar in revelry, a family kneels in sacred prayer, a little child is taught to sing and pray, and a sullen son doth curse his mother. To-night a banker bends down over his desk, he counts his gains, he sighs at what is lost, he sighs again, then suicides. To-night the graveyard ghouls dig up the cold departed dead and students stare at their gaunt and ghastly glacial forms. To night, from far above the starry spikes which support the azure skies, the eyes of God are downward cast and He beholds it all; this beautiful, still, cold night; God sees it all.

EPITAPH.

Stop, weary traveler, turn hither thine eyes,
And learn who beneath this sculptured stone lies.
Although I be dead yet I speak unto thee
From out the abyss of eternity.
Once I was like thee
So happy and free,
And could smile as I passed through this lone country.

But there came on the breeze that angel of old,
And he cut the gold cable that anchored my soul,
And he kindled the fire of sorrow at home
And hastened me off to the slumbering tomb—
This region of gloom
At midnight or noon,
Where the legions of earth shall be sepulchred soon.

THIS BOOK

Will be a relic of the past
For posterity's peruse,
Though I die a wandering beggar
And the victim of abuse.

FINIS.

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